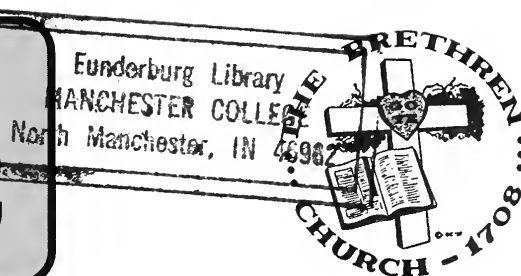


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The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 120, No. 1

A newsletter for Brethren people

January 1998

Executive Director Dr. Emanuel Sandberg asks:

Are Brethren ready for renewal?

THE BRETHREN CHURCH is in need of renewal. I include myself in having that need. The renewal I am talking about is a renewal of love within Christian believers that results in sinners being awakened, backsliders being reclaimed for Christ, dying churches being revived, the lost being converted, and society being reformed.

Church leaders often call for *revival* rather than *renewal*. But my problem with the word *revival* is that it conjures up visions of a tent meeting or of a series of meetings in our churches during the year in which we focus on reaching the lost in our community. To be sure, such meetings are often successful in bringing the lost to Christ.

A visit from God

But what I want to give primary attention to at this time is the work of God's Spirit among those who already know God and His Son. I want to focus on the explicit work of God in restoring, reviving, and re-directing His people by bringing the Holy Spirit down upon the Brethren—our churches, our districts, and our denomination—in such a way that it results in our communities, our states, and our whole country being reformed. In short, what we need is a visit from God!

Do you think you have a close, personal relationship with Jesus? Do you think the Brethren as a whole have a close relationship with God and His Son? Judge for yourself. Is there evidence to suggest that your walk with God has cooled? Consider the following in terms of your personal relationship with God:

- To what extent have you adopted the world's lifestyle?
- How important to your life is the acquisition of money and things?
- What are the dominant events in your life?
- What part does prayer play in your life?
- Are you continually seeking biblical truth?
- Do you employ your knowledge of biblical truth in your daily life?
- Do you avoid spiritual discussions?
- Do you accept the spiritual condition and moral decline of your community and country as a fact of life you cannot change?
- Is your heart cold to human suffering so that you do nothing to aid the sick and the poor?
- Do you focus on other people's faults and failures?
- Do you find it difficult to share spiritual beliefs and needs with others?
- Are you concerned that you not sin or just that no one find out about your sin?
- When you pray, do you ask God to serve you, or do you ask how you can serve God?
- Do you think you are a sinner?
- Do you think you need renewal?

What about the church?

What about The Brethren Church? Consider these facts:

- We have fewer Brethren churches and fewer members today than we had ten years ago.

- More than 75 percent of our Brethren churches have plateaued or declined in membership.

I think we can conclude that each Brethren church is simply a reflection of its members, and that The Brethren Church is a reflection of the churches that make up our denomination.

How did we get this way? We did so slowly...painlessly...unaware that we had allowed God to be crowded out of our lives.

Do I believe we are lost? No, I

and in *our daily lives*, we have become desensitized to the moral decay and declining social standards we live with and accept. We have lost our passionate desire for a close, personal relationship with Jesus and with our heavenly Father.

Do I believe we are lost? No, I
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Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.



SNAPSHOTS

By

Michelle Rhude

HOW DOES your family choose its Christmas tree? I'd love to collect stories of such family experiences. If you have one to share, please send it to me at shellrhude@aol.com.

I was talking to someone recently who described his family's yearly outing. It might sound somewhat familiar to you.

Tree-choosing time again! The family piles into the van and the hunt begins. As they enter the tree-acquisition zone, they scan their surroundings intently. They jump from the vehicle, eyes searching for the first glimpse of *IT*—the perfect tree. Each member of the family wants to be the one to find it.

As they scatter in different directions, they evaluate each tree, scanning it for major defects, examining it more closely if no huge flaws are immediately apparent. The timing is tricky. If one is too picky, someone else may find *IT* first. If one is not picky enough, ridicule, sneers, and embarrassment will follow the tree's presentation to the rest of the family.

As each person presents a tree, the remaining family members immediately assume judgmental attitudes, seeking defects that will disqualify this tree's nomina-

tion. Is it the right size? The right kind? Is it perfectly symmetrical? Are the branches properly aligned? Are there any bare spots? Each tree is judged according to the Christmas ideal. All losers are cast aside. Only the perfect is good enough.

Oops, a flaw is found! How could you want this tree? Are you crazy? Not wanting to admit defeat, the family member attempts persuasion, desperately trying to talk the others into accepting his or her choice. In reality, the tree is not the real goal. It's the personal victory of having found *IT* that is important. So each person lobbies for his or her candidate, promising that it will look perfect on the tree stand. Finally, in order to keep the competition from getting out of hand, Mom decides.

God's way is different

Aren't you glad that God doesn't choose His sons and daughters this way? (*For God does not show favoritism.* Rom 2:11) Aren't you glad that He doesn't hold us up side by side and debate our flaws before the heavenly host? Aren't you thankful that our imperfections don't disqualify us? I am!

And yet, I continue to hold things up to an imaginary ideal and func-

tion as a judge. Christmas trees may be one example, but they are unimportant compared with applying the same practice to people. What gives me the right to judge anyone else in any way? My perfect ideal? I don't think so. *My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism* (James 2:1).

The perfect Christmas tree and those left on the lot into January are all trees. Each was created by God. Likewise, the privileged, the educated, the beautiful people are no more—and no less—valuable in God's eyes than the uneducated, the underprivileged, and the unattractive.

This year, pray for God's eyes, that you might see each person you come into contact with (including the ones you live with) as God sees them—and that you might have the courage to love them as God does. Can you live that way? If you do, you will have a very happy and very blessed New Year. I pray that you will. [†]

"Snapshots" is a monthly column that seeks to illuminate our relationship with God by focusing on some of the everyday experiences of life. Mrs.



Rhude is a member of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Ind., and takes an active part in the life and ministry of that congregation.

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Pontius' Puddle

I JUST HAD A MAJOR INSIGHT. IN SPITE OF OUR DIFFERENCES, BLACK AND WHITE, ARAB AND JEW, MALE AND FEMALE, PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC SHARE ONE THING IN COMMON.



GREAT. AND WHAT'S THAT?

AN EXTREME MISTRUST FOR ONE ANOTHER.



FORGIVE US, LORD. IT'S JUST A PHASE WE'RE GOING THROUGH... MORTALITY.



© Joel Kaufmann

Ready for renewal?

(continued from page 1)

believe we are asleep. It's not the first time God's people have departed from Him! The Old Testament has account after account of God's people going astray, only to be revived and brought back to a renewed relationship with God through the intervention and grace of our Sovereign Lord. The same is true in New Testament times. And in the years since the time of the New Testament, the church has departed repeatedly from its close, intimate relationship with God.

A continuing cycle

The facts of church history suggest that the Christian Church has been in a continuing cycle of: (1) closeness to God; (2) departure from God; (3) spiritual awakening to God's love; (4) repentance by God's people; and (5) renewal and closeness to God. Consider some of the spiritual awakenings that have occurred during the last 500 years:

- The reformation of the 16th century, with the great reforms led by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox.
- The Puritan-Pietistic awakenings of the 17th century.
- The Moravian renewal and the 18th-century ministry of John and Charles Wesley (after their conversion by the Moravian Brethren) and of George Whitefield.
- America's second great awakening during the 18th century.

It is important to note that while humans seem to cycle from being in a close relationship with God to departing from Him and turning to worldly substitutes for His love and purposes, God remains faithful to His promises and faithfully loves His people.

Create in me a pure heart,
O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit
within me.

* * * * *

Restore to me the joy
of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit,
to sustain me.

Psalms 51:10 & 12; NIV

Where is The Brethren Church in that reveal the awesomeness of God's heavenly power;

It seems to me we are at a critical point in our history. Will we wake up and call out to God for help? Will we repent from our sins and our useless "dead works"?

"The point I want to make is this: Renewal comes from God's intervention, not from man's good works. We can, however, be agents of God's will and facilitators of God's action. And this year, that is what we are going to try to be."

When will we who desire change in our lives be able to **renew** our intimate relationship with God? Looking at the pattern traced by history, the only hope for renewal rests in believers becoming deeply disturbed by the events in their lives, personally distressed, and humbled. Awakening will occur when Christians believe that the only hope is the sovereign grace of God. As Brethren, as Christians, if we believe that renewal is necessary for the reformation of our society we must agonize and pray for a visit from God. We need a spirit of prayer. God is sovereign, and His Spirit in grace will bring us to renewal.

The point I want to make is this: Renewal comes from God's intervention, **not** from man's good works. We can, however, be agents of God's will and facilitators of God's action. And this year, that is what we are going to try to be. I pray that we will seek God's intervention in our lives to revive, renew, and reform our lives and our churches.

Actions we must take

I believe there are actions that we, as Brethren, must take if we want God to hear us. We need to:

- pray as believers in unity, with power and praise, for spiritual awakening;
- acquire a passion for spiritual formation;
- reevaluate and change our priorities;
- encourage our pastors to deliver powerful expositions of the Bible

that reveal the awesomeness of God's heavenly power;

- assemble and train for ministry members who love nothing but God, hate nothing but sin, and seek only the glory of God;
- develop and provide programs that center on the felt needs of the congregation and do God's work in God's way.

Are we as Brethren prepared for spiritual awakening—for spiritual renewal? The truth is, the future depends on you! Remember, renewal is a gift from our sovereign God. But we can facilitate His action through prayer . . . and by addressing the priority actions noted above.

Programs to facilitate renewal

The Brethren Church at the denominational level, in cooperation with the districts, will offer several programs to facilitate renewal. For example, we will have:

- At least two one-day or weekend retreats covering critical programs such as *Becoming a Praying Church; Renewal—Family, Marriage, Spiritual, and Pastoral; Knowing and Working God's Plan; etc.*
- Three or four regional seminars covering such subjects as *Jesus-Style Leadership; Finding My Place in the Body of Christ; The Winning Ways of Jesus and the Early Church; etc.*
- At least one workshop at each district conference (dependent upon the district's decision and the time available) on topics such as *Worship Ministry; The Time of Your Life; Gaining God's Heart for the Lost; The Incredible Power of Planning; Becoming a Happy Church Family; Improving Congregational Stewardship; etc.*

A list of the subjects to be offered and the dates and locations where they will be presented will be sent to each church on a quarterly basis.

An open door

The door is open for us. Will we enter that door? My desire is that every member of The Brethren Church will experience renewal, resulting in a deeper relationship with God and with His Son, Jesus Christ. I pray that this is your desire as well. [✠]

Reshaping Theological Education

By Frederick J. Finks



Dr. Frederick J. Finks, President,
Ashland Theological Seminary

A FEW YEARS ago a study was conducted among theological seminaries in the northwestern part of the United States. The purpose of the study was to determine what changes those seminaries had enacted to address the current needs of churches and Christian ministry in that area of the country. The findings of the study were alarming.

Unchanging curriculum

First of all, most of the seminaries that were surveyed had made little or no change in their theological curriculum. Most had maintained the curricular pattern established more than 100 years ago. They continued to teach the age-old disciplines associated with theological education.

The findings of this study were picked up by the Associated Press and printed in newspapers across the country. Editors and religious commentators were quick to point accusatory fingers at seminaries, lumping them all into the same category and judging them irrelevant to today's world.

Failure of seminaries to respond

to the changing patterns of American church life is in fact inexcusable. Seminaries that are guilty of such behavior certainly deserve to be called "ivory towers," "cemeteries," and "monasteries."

Not answerable to the church

A second finding actually concerned me more than the fact that seminaries for the most part had neglected the changes taking place in the church. This second finding, which I find quite appalling, is that seminaries took the position that they can teach whatever they want to teach and that they are not subject to the demands of the church.

The argument of some of the seminary leaders in this study was that they are being true to the ancient disciplines that are a part of higher education. For them it is more important to hold to a set of standards than to change the curriculum in order to better serve the church.

When I received a copy of this report, I was thankful that Ashland Theological Seminary had not held to this same philosophy. While it is true that certain disciplines must not be forsaken (theology, biblical studies, commitment to Greek and Hebrew, church history, etc.), never-

theless for theological education to be relevant and in fact beneficial to the church, we must learn how to integrate education and ministry. The historic disciplines are very important, but so are the practical disciplines that address the current culture of the church.

We are attempting to keep theological education out of a vacuum by integrating it with spiritual formation and faith community. Spiritual formation involves developing a "right heart" with God. Faith community means developing a "right relationship" with fellow Christians. When all three are blended together, theological education finds its context within the life of the church and within an intimate relationship with God.

A servant to the church

It is the responsibility of seminaries to teach Christian leaders not only how to "accurately handle the word of truth," but also how to apply that truth to everyday living. Ashland Theological Seminary views itself as a servant to the church. Because this is true, we will continue to rethink and to reshape our curriculum in order to better serve the church. [†]

Giving Fair Share Support

One of the ways in which Brethren churches contribute to the overall ministry and mission of Ashland Theological Seminary is by giving their Fair Share support, as approved by General Conference. The current recommended Fair Share amount is \$12 per Church Growth Index* point.

Giving to the Seminary by Brethren churches totals approximately \$80,000 each year. This is far

below the full Fair Share amount.*

By supporting Ashland Theological Seminary, we are supporting The Brethren Church, for by our gifts we are helping to train and prepare future ministers, missionaries, and ministry leaders. We must have the vision to see beyond our immediate situation and plan for the future. Encourage your church to contribute its Fair Share. [†]

*A congregation's Church Growth Index is calculated by totaling its membership, average worship attendance, and average Sunday school attendance, and then dividing that total by three.

**Editor's note:* The total Church Growth Index for The Brethren Church at the end of 1996 was 10,844. Thus the total Fair Share support to our seminary should be \$130,128.

Answering God's Call

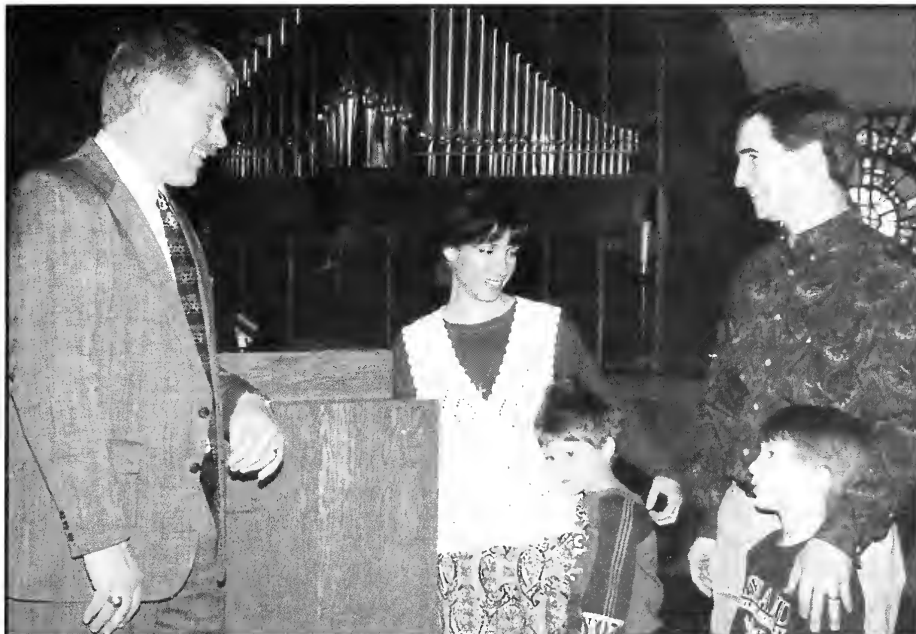
IT OFTEN TAKES a bold vision to move an immovable object. It often takes a miracle to convince the unbelieving. But it only takes God to change the world.

During General Conference last August in South Bend, Ind., a vision of what The Brethren Church could become began to take hold. This bold vision included planting churches and equipping leaders. That in itself was not new, but the outpouring of God's Spirit in so many visible ways was enough to convince many that this time is different.

More than 30 people came forward on Thursday night of Conference to commit their lives to full-time Christian ministry. Furthermore, seven Brethren men have enrolled in Ashland Seminary since August to prepare for pastoral ministry. This was in addition to those who had applied for admission prior to General Conference.

The Seminary has made a commitment to provide a full-tuition scholarship to any Brethren student preparing for full-time pastoral ministry (who is enrolled in the Master of Divinity program) and who agrees to serve at least five years in Brethren ministry. This amounts to approximately \$6,000 annually.

We are convinced that the church will respond to the need to train and equip its future leaders. Brethren have responded generously in the past and have made it possible to give scholarships. We are convinced that God will touch lives to make it possible in an even more dynamic way. [†]



Many Ashland Theological Seminary students are married and have children. Here Professor John Shultz (l.) shares a few light moments with Brethren students Karen Frado and John Allison and their sons, both of whom are named Michael.



Ashland Theological Seminary Professor Ron Waters (r.) chats with Brethren students (l. to r.) Gerry Weiss, Bruce Wilkinson, and Wes Glass.

Establishing Scholarships

In 1982, the entire scholarship endowment for the Seminary totaled only \$172,000. Today that endowment totals \$2,350,600. It produces approximately \$176,000 in annual scholarships for 700 students.

Several Brethren churches and many individuals have established endowed scholarships in memory of or in honor of loved ones. To endow a scholarship, contact Dr. Lee Solomon at the Seminary.

Brethren Students at ATS

Currently 22 Brethren students attend Ashland Theological Seminary. They are (home church in parentheses):

John Allison (Derby)
Debra Bixel (Park St.)
Bob Buford (Park St.)
James Frado (Linwood)
Karen Frado (Linwood)
Wes Glass (Linwood)
Annalee Hoover (North Georgetown)
Anthony Keim (Mt. Olive)
Brian Maurer (Garber)
Ron Miller (Linwood)
Adrianne Owens (Mt. Zion)
Arnold Owens (Pleasant View)
Joyce Owens (Pleasant View)
Dianna Park (Pleasant View)
David Reeves (Sarasota)
Tim Solomon (Sarasota)
Tony Price (New Lebanon)
Glenn Sprunger (Park St.)
Louise Waller (Northwest Chapel)
Gerry Weiss (Park St.)
Tracy Whiteside (Smoky Row)
Bruce Wilkinson (Linwood)

From Seeking Help to Sharing Hope

By Larry R. Baker

MOST PEOPLE have a mental picture of their preferred future. But frequently life does not play out like the mental picture. When this happens, some people lose their sense of purpose and their hope. But it doesn't have to be that way. God uses available people. People who may be hurting and in need of help can offer hope to others. Rev. Bob Stafford is a great example of just such a person.

In 1988 Bob Stafford was pastoring the Teegarden, Ind., Brethren Church and working with children in a psychiatric hospital, when he was diagnosed with breast cancer. His mental picture of his preferred future was altered drastically.

He had surgery for the cancer, but in 1991 it began to spread. By 1993 he was forced to retire because of the disease and the side effects of chemotherapy.

Bob discovered that many people were surprised to learn that a man had breast cancer. When he attended breast cancer support groups, women were usually uncomfortable with his presence. Besides, the clothes modeled in the style shows at these meetings weren't his type! He was often the lone male at breast cancer survivor events.

As a result, he began spending more time at his hobby—computers and surfing the internet. He found information about breast cancer on the internet, but very little about male breast cancer. He decided to join a breast cancer discussion list. His first post was, "I'm a man—will I be accepted here?" He was accepted, and many were curious.

Opportunities for ministry

When others on the discussion list learned that Bob had been a pastor, some of them sent questions to him privately about spiritual matters. Some wanted to make sure where they were going when they died. Others wanted to discuss their fears.

Bob has been able to share the gospel privately and to lead people to Christ over the internet! What began as a search for help is now an opportunity for ministry! What began as a search for help has blossomed into full-time ministry.

Since 1995, Bob has been the webmaster for the award-winning Male Breast Cancer information site on the internet (<http://interact.withus.com/interact/mbc/>). He is the "owner" of a Male Breast Cancer Discussion List with more than 45 members, and a Cancer Patient Christian Online Support List (space for which was donated by an atheistic Jew). Often he will post Bible studies on the Christian support list.

Since January 1996, he has also managed the Caring Parents Forum on the St. John's University server, which helps parents of children with



Cyber-Pastor Bob Stafford

per day reading and responding to e-mail and to posts on the forums, in addition to the time he spends in prayer for many of these concerns.

He also sends follow-up material to new Christians. And when a member of a support group dies, Bob facilitates an on-line memorial service of that person's life. Furthermore, he mentors other Christians by e-mail, so that they can help with this ministry. Recent topics in one forum were "What's Bob's Life Worth?" "life & death," "our journey," and "Why survive?" It's a tremendous opportunity to offer hope to people who are hurting and seeking help.

In the midst of all this, Bob has retained his tremendous sense of humor as well as his concern for the global church of Christ. Many of us receive jokes and prayer concerns from Bob on a regular basis. He has made television appearances on local news shows, on NBC's *Today* show, and on *Dateline*. Robert Schuller would say that Bob has let God "turn his scars into stars."

Opportunities on the internet

Bob wants other Christians to realize the tremendous opportunity for ministry presented by the internet. He says, "You can be a world missionary for \$20 a month. You are dealing with the 'movers and shakers' of the world. They are the ones who are online." He is convinced that the internet is one way to help fulfill the Great Commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations." He sees the internet used for evangelism, devotionals, prayer chains, missions news, research, and for offering hope to hurting people. It's also a place where shut-ins and the handicapped can minister.

Perhaps your mental picture of your preferred future has also been damaged or shattered. If so, don't lose hope. God can still work through you in exciting ways, just as He has worked through Cyber-Pastor Bob Stafford. [†]

Rev. Baker, pastor of the South Bend, Ind., First Brethren Church, is a close friend to Rev. Stafford.



Initial graphic on the Male Breast Cancer website.

critical illnesses. In addition, he helps manage a support forum just for kids who are critically ill.

Bob receives more than 300 pieces of e-mail per day. (His e-mail address is bstafford@skynet.net.) He is Cyber-Pastor to people all over the world—Peru, Canada, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Germany, Iceland, Russia, Japan, Turkey, etc. He spends four to five hours

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



January-February 1998

Volume 11, Number 3

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Christmas is over and we have begun the new year of 1998. I have finished my chemo treatments and will now see my oncologist every three months for two years and then every six months for three years. I feel great and am so thankful for all the prayers on my behalf. I have faith that the cancer is gone and will not return. Thanks again for *your* prayers.

The year 1997 was a year of new experiences for me. It was the first time I had radiation, the first time I 're-grew' my hair—two times. (This time it is coming in black!!) Those new experiences happened and my life went on. Through all of this I met some wonderful people. Many were Christians. I always told them of the many friends who were praying for me and of my faith in the Lord's healing. I have had the opportunity to talk to others with cancer and to tell them of the wonderful power of prayer.

There may be times when life seems unbearable. It could be physical pain, difficult decisions, death of a loved one, or other life-shaping problems. Sometimes we become fearful or have doubts. We may even find it difficult to pray. But if we know the Lord through a personal faith in Christ, we can experience peace of mind and a calmness of spirit.

We read in Philippians 4:6-7,
(continued on page 3)

In Appreciation

*But my God shall supply all your need
according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:19

Since 10 years ago, when the W.M.S. *Outlook* took on a new appearance, Jeanette Sullivan has been an integral part of the change. In 1987 Jan was appointed editor of the *Devotional Guide* and, with her ideas and suggestions, she has improved the format of the monthly programs.

Jan found new ladies to write their experiences and opinions on various topics and themes. We became acquainted with ladies throughout the denomination who serve the Lord with the same purpose.

Jan's program ideas have emphasized what we all know—that W.M.S. must meet the needs of the women while we keep the message that we serve missions. The mission may be in a neighborhood or around the world.

Jan spent much time in prayer before the first letter was written to begin the next *Devotional Guide*. Her publication was bathed in prayer and then she followed God's leading. This explains why it is such a valuable tool for our monthly meetings.

When she chose the 1997-98 theme, "Joy in our Journey," she had no clue that at times she would have to hunt for joy in this year's journey. Jan's husband, Ken, was her prayer partner and worked with her in the layout of

the publication. After his sudden death in May, Jan's daily strength came from knowing that in all things the Lord Jesus was with her.

After a difficult summer of making decisions: where to live, what to do, what is best for Dianne (her daughter) and for herself, Jan made the decision to move to Akron, Ohio, where she will be near her sister and Ken's mother, closer to Chris and her family (Jan's other daughter), and placement and employment opportunities for Dianne and Jan.

Jan's new address is 919 Lindsay Avenue, Akron, Ohio 44306. Telephone: 330-724-3780.

Jan, W.M.S. appreciates all your hopes and efforts you have given. Your years of ministry as editor concluded in August, but the effects are not finished. You have planted seeds for growth, and the rest of us will cultivate your plants. Thanks for being a woman who serves. We love you and continue our prayers for you.



W.M.S. DIRECTORY — 1998

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The President's Pen (continued)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." So, if you feel overwhelmed by your troubles, fix your mind on the Lord. Ask for His help. Trust Him. Let Him give you peace in your storm.

In your meetings this year, get the ABC's out and go over them—one by one. Would you like to see any changes? Any additions? Maybe some need to be rewritten. Please send me the suggestions your W.M.S. group might have. We plan to discuss the ABC's at our next W.M.S. Board meeting.

We have some changes in our Board members for this year. Janet Rufener has been appointed assistant treasurer; Penny Knouff

has been appointed literature secretary; Nancy Hunn will be the editor of the *Devotional Guide*. More about each of these ladies in a future *Newsletter*.

Please read carefully Linda Immel's letter about starting a new W.M.S. group. This is exciting! Her message to those who know nothing about W.M.S. can be easily duplicated in other churches. She began with prayer and a desire!

The following poem is for you to read and maybe put on your refrigerator or some place where you will see it often. Then do an act of kindness.

It Only Takes a Moment

*It only takes a moment to watch
 a butterfly
 Glide gracefully on gossamer wing
 Across the blue of sky.*

*But oh, the sheer enjoyment that
 such a moment brings;
 Its beauty lifts my spirits high.
 All day my glad heart sings.*

*It only takes a moment to give a
 friendly smile,
 To pay a lovely compliment,
 Or share a thought worthwhile.*

*Yet, little acts of kindness can
 cheer some soul along,
 And plant within a lonely heart
 A joyous, vibrant song.*

— Beverly J. Anderson

God Bless You.

Shirley

Shirley Black

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

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 Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

LOOK!

A note from Linda Immel in North Manchester, Ind., brought this good news.

I am so excited to share with you what GOD is doing with this new ladies' fellowship group. He is so faithful when we are obedient to His call. After General Conference I sent personal letters to ladies who were new to The Brethren Church, introducing them to W.M.S. I invited them to a meeting in my home, so I could further tell them about W.M.S., introduce them to missionary families, and answer questions they might have. There were nine at that meeting.

We went on a treasure hunt (I used the September program idea in the *Devotional Guide*) and made some great discoveries about the needs of these young gals. They really have the need and desire to "serve the Lord." We made plans to invite others to a brainstorming meeting in October.

When we met in October, I invited Cynthia Stout, the Indiana District president, to come and share why W.M.S. is important to her and to encourage the ladies in this endeavor. She was great! These young ladies are very local and community service-oriented, so we may not send checks for national offerings and projects this first year, but I believe it will happen, as they learn more about these special offerings.

They have already been encouraged by the JOY Circle and the Hadassah Circle (societies already established in the North Manchester Church), because these societies have paid this year's dues for them. We also have a new Indiana goal of participating in the Society Sister Program, and our Society Sisters are from the Goshen Chantel Circle. They sent us such an encouraging card and letters last month. These young gals truly have felt loved by other W.M.S. ladies. What a blessing!

We got so involved in our planning last month that we didn't even get around to deciding on a name, but we are going to get one

soon. It has to be just right, you know. We decided to wait to elect officers, too, so we plan to do that at our Christmas party.

I ask that you would pray for me, as I seek to follow God's leading for this group. These girls are mostly young, non-Brethren, so I really want to give them a love for Brethren missions and W.M.S. work. And I want this group to meet the needs of these girls and be in God's design, not mine.

In His Service, Linda

(Should you want to send encouragement or questions to Linda, her address is 401 E. Third St., North Manchester, IN 46962.)

Missionary Miscellany

Each of these items is in need of your daily prayers:

- Claudio and Karina Castelli are missionaries from the Argentine church to Paraguay.
- Sudhir Kumar's wedding date is in January 1998. He and his father, Prasanth, are looking in Vijayawada (vi-jay-a-wada), the new city where Sudhir has worked for several months, for a place for Sudhir and his wife to live as well as a center for worship.
- Mark and Chantal Logan, living in Djibouti, East Africa, reported an unusual amount of rain. Djibouti is a dry country, so torrential rains cause severe problems: huge mudholes and puddles which are stagnant, polluted, and breeding places for mosquitoes and flies. This leads to the spread of diseases. An epidemic of cholera has already caused many deaths. Prayers are needed for this Muslim country.
- Jen Thomas is affiliated with Spearhead and works with Todd and Tracy Ruggles in Mexico City as well. Jen's father died unexpectedly during Thanksgiving week, which necessitated a trip home to Canton, Ohio. Within the past three years her mother and her grandmother also died. Help her to be comforted and to know God's love.
- Three ministerial couples are raising start-up funds for new

church groups. Watch for developments from:

- (1) Jim and Elaine Thomas and the Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship in Peru, Indiana;
- (2) Mike and Barbara Woods in the Winchester, Virginia, area; and
- (3) Jim and Stephanie Boyd in Vista, California.

Prayers may be sent directly; financial gifts may be sent to Brethren Missions, 524 College Ave., Ashland, Ohio 44805.

Missionaries-of-the-Month for JANUARY are missionaries in Argentina: Allen Baer, and Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez. Allen, the senior missionary, serves The Brethren Church in many capacities in Buenos Aires. Eduardo and Mariela came from Buenos Aires in 1995 to attend Ashland Theological Seminary. In August they returned to Argentina to reopen Eden Bible Institute, a Brethren theological school which was closed in the 1970s. The need for a theological school is great, and the partnership of The Brethren Church in Argentina and The Brethren Church in the United States is strong!

The FEBRUARY missionaries are home mission pastors: Mike and Pam Sove at the Northview Brethren Life Church in Franklin, Ohio; and Tom and Debbie Sprowls at the Living HOPE Brethren Church in Medina, Ohio. Both are young families who pastor young congregations.

The MARCH missionaries are in South America: Miguel and Sonia Antunez in Lima, Peru; and Claudio and Karina Castelli in Paraguay.

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Much work goes into making the Directory correct. Should you see an error or an omission, please send me a note so our records can be complete. The information comes from the statistical report which you submit in June to the general secretary. We appreciate your complete and accurate reports.

Your friend,

Joan
Joan

Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People

By John Ortberg

FOR MUCH of my life, when I heard messages about following Jesus, I thought in terms of *trying hard* to be like Him. Spiritual transformation is not a matter of trying harder, but of training wisely.

This need for preparation applies to a healthy and vibrant spiritual life just as it does to physical and intellectual activity. Learning to think, feel, and act like Jesus is as demanding as learning to run a marathon or play the piano.

Following Jesus means learning from Him how to arrange my life around activities that enable me to live in the fruit of the Spirit. Disciplines are valuable because they allow us to do what we cannot do by willpower alone. Disciplines that are *spiritual* are simply those that help me live in the fruit of the Spirit.

The danger that arises when we don't experience authentic transformation is that we will settle for what might be called *pseudo-transformation*. We know that as Christians our faith and spiritual commitment should make us different somehow. But if we are not marked by greater amounts of love and joy, we will look for substitute ways of distinguishing ourselves from those who are not Christians.

If we do not become changed from the inside-out, we will be tempted to find external methods to satisfy our need to feel that we're different from those outside the faith. If we cannot be transformed, we will settle for being informed or conformed.

Jesus spoke to the deepest longings of the human heart to become not simply conformed to a religious subculture but transformed into "new creatures." Instead of focusing on the boundaries, Jesus focused on the center, the heart of spiritual life.

A boundary-oriented approach to spirituality focuses on a person's position: Are you inside or outside the group? A great deal of energy is spent clarifying what counts as a boundary marker. But Jesus focused on people's *center*. Are they moving *toward* the center of spiritual life

(love of God and people), or are they moving *away from* it?

Our primary task is not to calculate how many verses of Scripture we read or how many minutes we spend in prayer. Our task is to use these activities to create opportunities for God to work. Then what happens is up to Him.

We need the freedom to discover how God wants us to grow, for His design will not look quite the same for everyone.

C. S. Lewis once surmised that each person is created to see a different facet of God's beauty—

something no one else can see in quite the same way—and then to bless all worshipers through all eternity with an aspect of God they could not otherwise see.

Whatever our season of life, it offers its own opportunities and challenges for spiritual growth. Instead of wishing we were in another season, we ought to find out what this one offers. *Life counts—all of it*. Every moment is potentially an opportunity to be guided by God into His way of living. Every moment is a chance to learn from Jesus how to live in the kingdom of God. [†]

This article is taken from the book, The Life You've Always Wanted to Live (subtitled Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People) by John Ortberg (Zondervan, 1997). The article was provided by the publishers and is used by permission.

Bucking the Trend

By Sam Shultz

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO . . . if He were in my situation? Many people wear the WWJD bracelet, and that's good. But do they really understand what it's all about? Do they know that the whole concept began in the 1890's?

Charles M. Sheldon wrote a book called *In His Steps* that became very popular. It was based on the principle, "What would Jesus do if He were in my situation?" It was about a pastor who experienced a situation in which a sick and dying man needed help getting a job. All the pastor said was, "I hope you find something soon," and something to the effect of "I'll pray for you." The man later died in the pastor's home.

The pastor spent a long time in thought, and then he challenged his congregation to go a whole year asking the question before every decision, "What would Jesus do?"

The book goes on to tell what happened to each member of the church. I encourage you to read this book to obtain an overall understanding of the whole concept of WWJD.

Jeff Crowder, my best friend, says he hates "trendies." Trendies look dumb just following the crowd. Well, I think that wearing the WWJD bracelets is getting to be a trend. Come on, I've seen a gas station selling these things. I agree

with Jeff. Many people wear them for fashion reasons or because a friend gave them one. Hey, if you want to look slick with this fad, forget WWJD; try WD-40 instead.

Other people wear the bracelets because they make them feel good. They remind them of God. If they really remind you of God, that's great. But is that all?

I wore the ever-popular Salvation Bracelet for this same reason. It reminded me of God, and people asked about it. I quit wearing it. Why? Because I found something better to do. I talk to God now instead of just thinking about Him.

If there is something you need to remember, you tie a string around your finger. If you have to keep remembering that God is there every day, then you've got a problem. The more you get to know Him, the more evident He becomes and the less you need a string.

I encourage you to think about your WWJD stuff. Ask yourself, "What good is it doing me?" [†]

Sam Shultz, a member of the Jefferson Brethren Church (Goshen, Ind.), is a senior at Fairfield Junior/Senior High School, where he writes a column—"Samthing to think about"—for The Talon, the school newspaper. This was his column for the December 4, 1997, issue.

Executive Board, Ministries Councils meet to provide vision and direction for the ministries of The Brethren Church

CONSIDERATION of a vision statement prepared by Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg, the new Executive Director of The Brethren Church, was one of the important items of business conducted by the Executive Board, the Missionary Ministries Council, and the Congregational Ministries Council when these agencies each met in Ashland, Ohio, last November 11 and 12. These were the first full meetings of these agencies since Dr. Sandberg was appointed Executive Director at the 1997 General Conference.

One of the major responsibilities of the Executive Director is to give visionary leadership to The Brethren Church. His vision statement is one means of providing that leadership. A draft of the statement was presented to the Executive Board and to the two Ministries Councils. Members of the three agencies not only offered their comments and suggestions, but they also took shared ownership of the statement as *their* vision for The Brethren Church. The statement, "A Vision for the Future," was printed in last month's issue of the EVANGELIST (see page 1 of the December issue).

These meetings were also the first that Rev. David West attended as Director of Congregational Ministries and as Director of Church Planting, since taking these positions in October. He met with all three groups during the course of the two days of meetings.

Following are some of the actions taken by each of the three agencies.

Executive Board

Acting on a recommendation from the Congregational Ministries Council, the Executive Board voted to enter into a two-year partnership (for 1998 & 99) in **New Life Ministries**, involving a commitment of \$12,500 per year. New Life Ministries, which replaces The Andrew Center (in which The Brethren

Church was also a member), has as its purpose "to multiply the number of persons turning to Jesus Christ by multiplying the number of leaders and congregations that are spiritually alive and evangelistically effective." Denominational membership in New Life Ministries includes free membership for all local Brethren congregations giving them access to the services the agency provides. The Executive Board also named Rev. David West as The Brethren Church's representative to the board of trustees of New Life Ministries.

Acting upon a recommendation by the Missionary Ministries Council, **the board set a policy** that when an executive employee makes an official trip of two weeks or more, the employee's spouse may accompany the employee as a designated representative of The Brethren Church, with the National Office responsible for the spouse's cost of travel. Also at the recommendation of the Missionary Ministries Council, the board revoked the class status of **West Valley Brethren Life Church** of Tracy, Calif. This action was taken because West Valley no longer functions as a Brethren class and because its class status had already been revoked by the Board of Directors of the Northern California District.

The board began making plans for the **1998 General Conference**. The Conference will have a renewal emphasis and be primarily a celebration. Plans are being made for a concert of prayer, workshops, Table Talks, auxiliary times, and special sessions for men and women.

Two task forces were formed by the board. One will consider district operations and structure. Appointed to this task force were Roy Andrews, Larry Baker, Mike Drushal, Emery Hurd, Dale Stoffer, and Buzz Sandberg (chair). The second task force was formed to promote General Conference 2000, which is to be

held at Estes Park, Colorado. Members of this task force are Cathy Britton, Jim Frado, Emery Hurd, and David West (chair).

Congregational Ministries Council

Since this was his first meeting with the council as Director of Congregational Ministries, **Rev. David West** took time at the beginning of the meeting to share his core values and what he hopes to accomplish in his new position. He said that he believes prayer is foundational; he is not afraid of failure so is willing to try new things; he believes in excellence; and he is committed to teamwork. He sees himself as an agent to help lead The Brethren Church through retooling, revitalization, and repurposing.

Recognizing the value of **e-mail** as a communication tool within The Brethren Church, the council is encouraging Brethren pastors and churches to get "on line" as quickly as possible. The council provided information about a free e-mail service in the November 28 issue of *Leadership Letter*.

The council discussed the need to strengthen **ministries for women and men** in The Brethren Church. To this end, the council requested that the Executive Board provide a specific time on the 1998 General Conference schedule (different from the meeting times for auxiliaries) for dialogue on women's and men's ministries.

The council plans to again sponsor **Table Talks** at the 1998 General Conference. Council members Tina Henderson, Emery Hurd, and Tina Ross agreed to coordinate planning for these discussion groups.

Ten to twelve churches will be involved in the initial "class" of the **leadership initiative**, with these churches to begin consultations with their mentors early in 1998. District and regional seminars and workshops are being planned for churches not currently involved in the leadership initiative.

Missionary Ministries Council

Church-planting opportunities are growing. The building of the former Walcrest Brethren Church of Mansfield, Ohio, will be used as a facility for a new Brethren Church.

Ron Miller, a senior at Ashland Theological Seminary, and his wife Sandy have been assessed, trained, and approved for deployment to lead this new church start.

Two church-planting events are planned for 1998—a Mother/Daughter church-planting conference, and a multiple-track church-planting summit. The summit will include training for district mission board members, church planters, potential mother-church pastors, as well as general plenary sessions.

Executive Director Buzz Sandberg presented his vision, priorities, and goals for The Brethren Church to the council. Church renewal is at the top of his list. Identifying, recruiting, training, and deploying Brethren people in a variety of ministries is part of his vision as well.

In **World Missions**, The Breth-

ren Church in **Argentina** has re-established its Bible institute. This is a joint effort of the Argentine Brethren Church, The Brethren Church in the U.S., and Ashland Theological Seminary. Claudio and Karina Castelli from The Brethren Church in Argentina are the new missionaries in **Paraguay**. Dedicated lay people in Paraguay kept the church going for several years, with the help of supervisors from Argentina.

Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda has resigned as consultant to the Missionary Ministries Council, effective December 31, 1997. He is taking one more trip to Colombia for Brethren Missions this month (January) to help the Ferreris, a missionary family from Argentina, get established in the work in Colombia. **Allen Baer**, who has served many years as a Brethren

missionary in Argentina, is also resigning, effective at the end of his term in August 1998. He will retire to Arizona after doing deputation.

Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries, will be visiting **India and Malaysia** for about four weeks in January and February. He will participate in the ordination of K. Sudir Kumar and dedicate the new mission center in Vijayawada, India. His wife Cindy will travel with him, thanks to donations from several districts and the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church.

The council plans to host a **missionary banquet** this year at General Conference and to sponsor several Table Talks.

The next meetings of the Executive Board and the two councils are scheduled for March 17-18 in Ashland, Ohio. [†]

Missions Director Reilly Smith reports on his recent visit to Brethren mission work in Lima, Peru.

I HAD a very enjoyable time in Peru, South America, in December, when I traveled there to visit our Brethren mission workers, Miguel and Sonia Antunez.

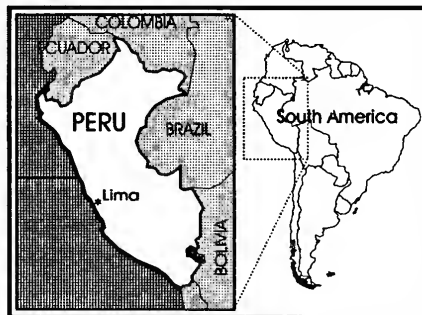
I flew to Lima on December 10, where Miguel and Sonia met me at the airport about midnight and took me by taxi to their house. In past visits to Peru, I stayed in a hotel, but this time I stayed in their home. I truly enjoyed my time with them, for they are wonderful hosts. Their home is humble but very nice. We enjoyed sharing meals together in their home and also eating out. I really feel as though I know this couple much better now.

The Brethren Church in Peru faced many obstacles during 1997. Several Catholic families revoked permission for their children to attend Sunday school and worship services. A few Brethren stopped being faithful. One teacher withdrew from ministry because of family problems. Others became preoccupied with earthly careers. Miguel and Sonia also faced some family problems with their son, Carlos. As a result, they were discouraged.

I was able to encourage them during my brief visit. I pointed out that despite these setbacks, attendance

is stable. They still need to build or remodel their building in order to fit more people into the services.

I accompanied Miguel as he went about most of his daily activities. He speaks to everyone everywhere he goes. He shares his faith with anyone who will listen. He knows everyone in the neighborhood: their names, spouses, children, even most of the pets! He loves them all, and they know it! I pointed these things out to him.



Carlos called while I was there. He is moving home to finish college. Miguel and Sonia rejoiced in this.

Sonia gave me a tour of the Christian school where she teaches. The school is a ministry of a local Baptist church. It is just like the Ashland Academy of Learning that my daughter, Catrinna, attends. They are both Schools of Tomorrow which use the A.C.E. method of individualized programmed learning. The only difference is that Sonia's materials are in Spanish.

Miguel and I visited the academy where he teaches English. One of the two women Miguel works with attends the Brethren church. The other woman is not a Christian, but she will be! Several of the students asked Miguel to start a Bible study. Attendance is growing.

In addition, some of Miguel's former students who are now in the business world have invited him to teach English at their businesses. Sometimes he is asked to speak to the employees about Christ. One secular business school asked Miguel to bring his drama group to present a musical play for Christmas. They also wanted him to share the gospel at the end of the play.

Opportunities for the Brethren in Peru are almost limitless. While I was there, I preached on Sunday evening. I emphasized our responsibility to reach people for Jesus Christ. We must help people *meet Christ, know Christ, love Christ, and follow Christ*. I presented the gospel from these four perspectives.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn more about our mission fields and especially our missionaries. Each trip provides me with new growth experiences. Everywhere I go, I find that God is good. The Brethren are faithful. And we are blessed more than we know here at home. I pray that God will create a greater desire in us to share our blessings! [†]



Rev. Kurt and Heidi Stout

Kurt Stout ordained an elder at North Manchester Church

North Manchester, Ind. — Kurtis A. Stout was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Heidi was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held Sunday afternoon, October 12, at the North Manchester First Brethren Church, where Rev. Stout serves as associate pastor.

The ordination was a "family affair," with members of the new elder's family participating in the service. Kurt's parents, Allen and Cynthia Stout, gave a "Parents' testimony and dedication"; one of his two sisters, Katrina Rathbun, read scripture; and his other sister, Kathryn Carter, played a flute solo.

Scriptural charges were presented by two of Kurt's former professors—Faye Chechowich, professor of Christian education at Taylor University; and Dr. Grace Holland, professor of missions at Ashland Theological Seminary. Brethren elders participating in the service were Marlin McCann, Dennis



Putting vinyl siding on the Louisville Brethren Bible Church building are (l. t. r.) Dan Moran, Damon Moran, Armand Rex, Steve Critean (on tall ladder), Paul Critean, Ben Solomon (on short ladder) Tom McAlister, and Pastor Ralph Gibson.

Brethren Bible Church building gets face lift

Louisville, Ohio — Members of the Louisville Brethren Bible Church recently completed a much-needed face-lift of their church building.

Three years ago a new roof was put on the building. Then some re-landscaping work was done. The last project that needed to be completed was to repair or replace the deteriorating siding.

After receiving estimates exceeding \$9,000, the trustees decided to undertake the project themselves, at a savings of approximately \$5,000. So under the leadership of Paul Critean a member of the church who is an experienced builder, ten men of the congregation worked on the project. Four Saturdays and three week nights in late August and early September were all the time it took to complete the project.

Not only did the men get the work done, they also enjoyed the time of Christian fellowship. The women of the church got involved as well, serving the men lunch each Saturday. Others in the congregation also got involved by contributing toward the \$4,009 needed to pay for building materials. Special gifts were received totaling \$4,100.

"We praise the Lord for the many blessings we received through this project," said Ben Solomon, moderator of Brethren Bible Church. "We also praise the Lord as we enjoy our new pastor and his family. Ralph and Bonnie Gibson began their full-time ministry here the first of August. We are excited about the Gibsons' calling, and we look forward to their exciting new ministry!"

— reported by Ben Solomon

Sigle, Duane Dickson, and David Cooksey. Additional special music was presented by the North Manchester Church Bell Choir and by a youth trio (Nate Little, Greta Miller, and Kim Shumaker).

Kurt was born August 28, 1969, in Kokomo, Indiana. He attended the Burlington First Brethren Church with his family, where in 1974 he gave his life to Jesus. He is a 1988 graduate of Kokomo Christian School and a 1992 graduate of Taylor University with a B.A. degree with majors in Biblical Litera-

ture and Christian Education and a certificate in Youth Ministry. He also attended Ashland Theological Seminary, from which he received a Master of Divinity degree in 1995.

Kurt and Heidi (the daughter of Randy and Sharon Fruitt of North Manchester) were married August 27, 1994. Heidi is a student at Manchester College, from which she will receive a Secondary English Education Degree in May.

Rev. Stout has served as associate pastor at North Manchester First Brethren since 1995. [¶]

Rod Schuler ordained at Corinth Brethren Church

Twelve Mile, Ind. — Rodney Schuler was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Nancy was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held Sunday, November 16, at Corinth Brethren Church, where Rev. Schuler serves as pastor.

Rev. Gene Eckerley, pastor of the Mishawaka Community Brethren Church and the Indiana District Elder, gave the ordination message. Also participating in the service were Brethren elders Jim Naff, Ron Burns, and Marlin McCann; Rev. George Swank, a retired pastor under whom Rodney formerly served; and Larkin Beecher, moderator of the Corinth Church.

Shirley Easter and Lynn Schmid were musicians for the service, and Cyrena Staller led singing. Special music was presented by Four-Given (Julie Fred, Margaret Hubenthal, Cyrena Staller, and Jill Zartman).



Rev. Rodney and Nancy Schuler with their children (l. to r.) Christina, Sarah, Jonathan, and Stephanie

Rodney was born December 6, 1959, to George and Lois Schuler and grew up on a farm outside Dows, Iowa. Nancy (Eastman) was born in Sault Sainte Marie, Mich., but spent most of her childhood in South Bend, Ind. Both Rod and Nancy committed their lives to the Lord during high school, and both attended Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bible



College, where they met. They were married July 3, 1982.

After graduating from college in 1983, Rod and Nancy served as church planters with the Missionary Church in Portage, Ind. In 1985 Rod became associate pastor of the New Paris, Ind., Missionary Church, and then in 1988 he began pastoring the Tippecanoe, Ind., Community Church. During this time (1986 ff.) he began attending Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Ind., receiving his Master of Divinity degree in 1994. In 1993, while finishing his work at Grace Seminary, he became pastor of the Corinth Brethren Church.

The Schulers have four children—Jonathan (11), Sarah (9), Stephanie (7), and Christina (4). [†]

Darrell Ed Miller becomes Brethren elder at Fremont

Fremont, Ohio — Darrell Ed Miller became a new Brethren elder and his wife Marcia was consecrated as the wife of an elder at a service held Sunday, November 9, at the Fremont First Brethren Church, where Rev. Miller serves as pastor.

Rev. Lynn Mercer, pastor of the Gretna Brethren Church (Bellefontaine, Ohio) was the speaker for the service. Also participating in the ordination were Brethren elders Dave Cooksey and Bill Kerner; Rev. Bob Moore, pastor of a church in the community; and Ron Diehl, moderator of the Fremont Brethren congregation.

Kay Ellis presented two vocal solos; Marcia Miller played the postlude; and the worship team (Brian Burkett, Marcia Miller, Kay Ellis, Stephanie Patterson, Bob Gill, Roberta Patterson, Dan Ellis, and Ed Miller) led the music. A fellowship dinner followed the service.

Ed (as Darrell is better known) was born February 25, 1960, in Kittanning, Pa., son of the late Darrell



Rev. Darrell (Ed) and Marcia Miller with daughters (l. to r.) Carrie, Amy, and Laura.

and Bessie Miller. He graduated from Kittanning High School in 1978, then worked in the construction and limestone mining industries as a mechanic, heavy equipment operator, truck driver, and laborer until 1994. He returned to college in 1991 and began attending Ashland Theological Seminary in 1993, graduating with a Master of Divinity degree in Biblical Studies in May 1996.

Marcia, daughter of Howard and Shirley Woodside, was born near Ford City, Pa. She and Ed met as a result of their participation in

music and square dancing at the Armstrong County League of Arts. They were married August 5, 1978.

They were active members of North Buffalo Grace Brethren Church until 1988, when they joined the Pleasant View Brethren Church of Vandergrift, Pa. Here Ed and three other men were mentored and encouraged by Pastor Keith Hensley to prepare for ministry. In 1994, Ed and T.J. McLaughlin (one of the other three men) accepted a call to co-pastor the Fremont First Brethren Church. In 1996, Pastor McLaughlin accepted a call to another ministry, and Pastor Miller continued to serve the Fremont congregation.

Mrs. Miller is Ed's ministry partner, playing keyboard with the worship team and participating in the Ministry of Outreach and in W.M.S. She also is employed in the kitchen at Bethany Place retirement center.

The Millers have three daughters, Carrie, a sophomore at Fremont Ross High School; Laura, an eighth-grader at Fremont Junior High; and Amy, a sixth-grader at Hayes Elementary School. [†]



Berlin Church building is now accessible to all

Berlin, Pa. — Like many older church buildings (and some newer ones), the Berlin Brethren Church presented formidable obstacles to anyone in a wheelchair or who for whatever reason has difficulty going up and down steps.

You couldn't enter the building without going up steps or a ramp. In addition, many of the congregation's functions (Communion services, fellowship dinners, social activities) take place in the fellowship room in the basement, accessible only by going down some rather steep steps. Furthermore, the church library and some of the Sunday school classrooms are in a balcony, up some equally steep steps.

But all that changed this past year when the Berlin Brethren completed a two-year, \$125,000-renovation project that included installing an elevator and providing handicapped-accessible restrooms. Now all levels of the building, including the balcony, can be accessed by the elevator. And this spacious elevator (with a capacity of 3,500 pounds), can be used by anyone, not just the handicapped. Thus people who can go up and down steps but who have difficulty doing so are more likely to use it. The elevator is also available anytime the church is open, not just for church services.

The Berlin Church was in particular need of this elevator. Not only does this congregation, like most churches in our "graying" country, have a growing number of elderly people in its membership, but it also has an unusual number of people with special needs. The Berlin community has several group homes where persons with physical disabilities are housed and cared for. A number of these people—sometimes as many as a dozen—attend Sunday school classes and



The entrance to the elevator at the Berlin Church is at ground level. All levels of the building are accessible from the elevator—the basement, main floor, and balcony.

worship services at the Berlin Church. Several of them have joined the congregation and attend regularly. Not only have these people been made to feel welcome in the church, they have also been given the opportunity to join a special hand-chimers' group, organized and directed by Jan Menhorn.

A dedication for the elevator/restroom renovation project was held June 7 of last year. The dedication included a special service at the elevator site followed by a dinner in the church basement. After the dinner, a special musical program was presented in the church auditorium.

The renovation project was headed by Ellis Kimmel, chair of the renovation committee, and Jack Brant, who served as the liaison with the several contractors involved. Other members of the renovation committee were Bob Glessner, Penny Deem, Jeff Hoover, Scott Landis, Tom Sprowls, Sr., and Pastor Bryan Karchner. The project, which is paid for in total, has been a major factor in the Lord's work in the growth of the Berlin Brethren Church.

—reported by Tom Sprowls, Sr.

Editor's note: The Berlin Brethren have set an example for other Brethren churches in providing for the special needs of those with handicaps and in making them feel welcome in their congregation. They are to be commended

(and imitated!) for this. Last year, when I attended the Berlin church, a woman in a wheelchair sang a solo. This is the only time I can remember ever seeing a person in a wheelchair present special music during a worship service!

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Vol. 120, No. 2

A newsletter for Brethren people

February 1998

"Fill Our Thirsty Souls . . ."

By David L. West

THE BRETHREN CHURCH has registered its intent to embark on an incredible journey. It is a journey that has only one course. It has only one goal. And only one vehicle will get us there.

The journey is one of **renewal**. The "course" necessary for this journey is the path of surrender. We need to trade in our desire for self-rule and accept God's rule. We need to renounce our will and surrender to God's will. It is on this course of surrender that the goal of renewal can be achieved.

I believe the ultimate goal is that His church be fully empowered to be light in an increasingly dark world. His church—renewed, vibrant, focused, purposeful, in love with Jesus, effectively taking the Gospel of Salvation to a lost and dying people—that is what we want. That is the goal of a people on a journey of renewal.

The "vehicle" to renewal

The "vehicle" that will carry us on this journey, that will enable us to reach that goal, is simply and sovereignly the Spirit of God. Renewal requires the Holy Spirit! Jesus Himself commanded His followers to wait for the gift promised them by the Father. From what we glean from Acts 1:4-8, it is apparent that the power needed to become His witnesses throughout the world

comes from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the promised gift.

The church today needs the empowering, enabling, gifting Spirit of God if it is to be renewed. I am not suggesting that we need another Pentecost. What I am suggesting is that we too often attempt to renew, revive, and retool His church through the inventions and intentions of human wisdom. It is time (again) for Brethren to seek a new light from the Holy Word of God through the Holy Spirit's sovereign illumination. His church needs His

Spirit. If we are to be renewed, the vehicle needed to get us there is the Holy Spirit.

A starting point

I have pondered this whole concept of renewal for myself personally and for His church corporately. I would like to suggest a **starting point** from which to embark on this journey of renewal. I would like to suggest that renewal starts with **prayer**. It is through prayer that we maintain an intimate relationship with Christ as Savior and God as Heavenly Father. Prayer is the communion of seeking and knowing. His Word tells us that it is in prayer that we can know Him and His will for us.

Dr. Neil T. Anderson and Dr. Elmer L. Towns have co-authored a marvelous new book entitled *Rivers of*

Revival (Regal Books, 1997). In the book (p. 67) they offer these thoughts:

Nothing is more important than knowing God. Nothing will change your life more than an encounter with Him. Sad will be the results if we send people into the world in obedience to His Word, but without them knowing Him in a deeply personal way. Great will be the results of those who know God as their heavenly Father and minister from the overflow of their sanctified hearts. It is the difference between being driven and called, between burnout and bearing fruit. We are no threat to the devil if we have only the words of Christ and not the life of Christ.

Renewal will come when we meld the knowledge of His Word with the spirit of His life. Prayer urged by His Spirit is the crucial first "step" of knowing and loving. We must know and love if we ever hope to "be" and "do." Prayer is the foundation, and we have already witnessed some of its importance since our last General Conference.

Vivid in my memory is the simple
(continued on page 3)

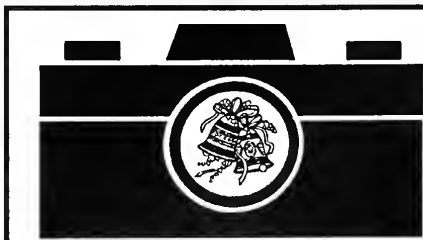


Rev. David West

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.



SNAPSHOTS

By

Michelle Rhude

WHAT'S the most stressful part of getting married? Is it contemplating "until death do us part?" Or making 10,000 decisions? Or making 10,000 decisions with one's soon-to-be-related-for-ever in-laws? Or making 10,000 decisions with one's in-laws, one's parents, and one's future spouse—under constraints of both time and money? Or maybe it's the "that-pastor's-going-to-ask-me-personal-questions" premarital counseling sessions.

I became engaged in June of 1989 and didn't bother making any actual wedding plans until finding out that my future husband was being unexpectedly and immediately transferred across the country. We put the wedding together in just over six weeks, so much of it remains a blur to me.

I do, however, remember three details very clearly about the pastor and the premarital counseling sessions. First, I was not a Christian at the time, and I remember being very nervous. Second, the pastor who married us became divorced within six months of our marriage, and that was a little unsettling.

The third detail was one particular question the pastor asked us. It wasn't the most important

question we discussed, I'm sure—although I don't remember any of the others. It was a question I would have liked to have prepared for, to have thought about, to have had a good answer for, because my parents deserved that I give a good answer. The question the pastor asked was this: "What do you consider to be the most important thing your parents ever taught you?" He asked it, and then looked right at me.

I remember thinking, "No fair! This isn't about marriage. Do all pastors ask this question?" But I said, "That every one of my actions has a consequence, and I am responsible for those consequences."

After I said it, I thought, "Wow, that was pretty good for a pop quiz!" Then I noticed the pastor's expression. That obviously wasn't the answer he was hoping for, and he wasn't impressed at all.

I thought about that question a lot afterwards, but then forgot about it for several years. It came up again in a long-winded, long-distance telephone call I had with my sister several years after I had become a Christian. We discussed the question and her belief that training a child to understand the implications of actions, consequences and responsibility is

foundational for an understanding of the Gospel.

It was easy for us to understand and accept that the wages of sin is death, because we believed that our actions have consequences. It was easy for us to see that our eternal destiny was our own responsibility, because we believe that we're responsible for the consequences of the actions we choose.

Personal responsibility for consequences is not a popular idea in our culture today. We much prefer to play the blaming game.

Parents, if you are struggling to teach this concept to your children, be encouraged. You fight an important battle. Keep at it. Teach your children the Gospel message, but also teach them the concepts that will help them believe it!

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Rom. 6:23, NIV [¶]

Editor's Note: This is the final article in "Snapshots." Over the past 14 months, Michelle Rhude has illuminated our relationship with God by focusing on some of life's experiences. She now finds it necessary to conclude the column. As she does so, I personally, and on behalf of her readers, express sincere thanks to Michelle for her insightful and enlightening articles, and wish her God's blessing.

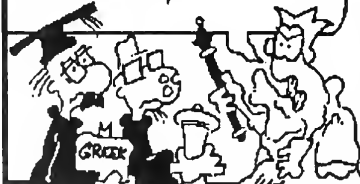


I personally, and on behalf of her readers, express sincere thanks to Michelle for her insightful and enlightening articles, and wish her God's blessing.

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Pontius' Puddle

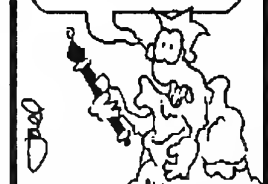
THEOLOGIANS HAVE MADE SCRIPTURE TOO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. BRING ME A PROPHET WHO CAN EXPLAIN FAITH SIMPLY.



LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF, AND GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE POOR.



UHM. ON SECOND THOUGHT, BRING BACK THE THEOLOGIANS!



© Joel Kaufmann

prayer our brother Hal Seed challenged us to start praying: "God, I don't ask You for much today; I just ask that You give me Your heart for lost people." Since August, I have heard this prayer offered many times. I have witnessed lives surrendered throughout the church as people have courageously prayed this prayer. Lives have been changed. Life courses have been altered. And the passion of purpose has been renewed within His church. This prayer is the lens that corrects the myopic vision of our hearts and enables us to start seeing things through God's eyes.

A haunting melody

There is a song by Jimmy and Carol Owens that has been reverberating throughout my heart and soul of late. The same melody that puts me to sleep at night is there waiting for me in the morning. It has laid claim to my consciousness. I sing it, hum it, speak it in my mind, declare it publicly, pray it, but cannot get rid of it. The portion of the song that has caused all the consternation is this:

*Lord, make us a holy people.
Turn our hearts to righteousness
again.
Take away our sin.
Fill our thirsty souls again.
Visit us with the Holy Spirit.
In the beauty of holiness descend,
Like a mighty wind.
Fill our thirsty souls again.
Come like fire, or come like the
gentle rain,
But fill our thirsty souls again.*

The sentiment of that song reflects my heart's desire and that of a growing number of other Brethren as well. I know there are those who will feel that renewal is passé. Some will doubt whether or not our churches can be sold on the idea of renewal.

But what if...? One of my favorite definitions of friends is people who allow me to think aloud with them. So, my friends, what would happen in God's church called Brethren if we covenanted to pray in renewal? What would happen if we agreed together that every church would set aside the first Sunday evening of every month to ask God to:

*Come like fire, or come like the
gentle rain,
But fill our thirsty souls again?*

What do you suppose the effect would be if each of us as Brethren would pray one day a week for the quenching of our souls? We could very easily have people praying every day of every month for the Spirit of renewal to come upon The Brethren Church.

Epaphras project

The Apostle Paul wrote the Colossians about a fellow saint and servant of Christ named Epaphras. Colossians 4:12 speaks of Epaphras as one who "... is always wrestling in prayer for you ..." Apparently, when Epaphras prayed, he agonized for his brethren. Are we willing to do that?

I would like to challenge the Brethren to pray in renewal for God's church. I ask that individuals and churches across our denomination contact me if you would be will-

ing to be part of an Epaphras Project. (A form is printed below for your convenience.) The purpose of this project will be to mobilize and coordinate a prayer force for renewal. Write me, phone me, e-mail me, or use any method you choose, but let us unite in prayer for the renewal of His church.

*Lord, make us a holy people.
Turn our hearts to righteousness
again.
Take away our sin.
Fill our thirsty souls again.
Visit us with the Holy Spirit.
In the beauty of holiness descend,
Like a mighty wind.
Fill our thirsty souls again.
Come like fire, or come like the
gentle rain,
But fill our thirsty souls again.*

Renew us, O Lord! [†]

Rev. West is Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church and also serves as Director of Church Planting.

Epaphras Project

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. Colossians 4:12, NIV

I would like to know more about the Epaphras Project and how I can become involved in "wrestling in prayer" for personal renewal, renewal of my church, and denominational renewal.

Please send information to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State and Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Clip and mail to:

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Habits of Highly Ineffective Christians:

Make Prayer Occasional

By Chris Fabry

In the lead article in this issue, Rev. Dave West emphasizes the importance of prayer for renewal in The Brethren Church. Sometimes a message penetrates our minds more forcefully when it is also presented conversely, especially if that presentation holds a mirror up to our lives and makes us laugh. You may find that to be the case in the following article, which takes a different approach to prayer.

The article is reprinted from the book The 77 Habits of Highly Ineffective Christians by Chris Fabry; ©1997 by Christopher H. Fabry. It is used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

COMMUNICATION is one of the most important aspects of any relationship, and that is why you should make prayer something occasional in your life.

If you were to see your union with God as something vital and living, you would desire constant communication. After all, to know

you can speak to the King of Kings at a moment's notice is truly a staggering thought.

But ineffective Christian living will make this communication sporadic, or simply an option that's tacked on at dinner and during worship services.

As I've said earlier in this volume, you should pray only about the large decisions in life, like who to marry, what college to attend and whether to get tinted glass in your minivan. But true mediocrity demands even less. What you must actually do is make up your mind about the decision that faces you, and then subtly conform the will of the Almighty to your own. This not only justifies whatever choice you make but also makes you feel spiritual since you can rightly say, "I prayed about it."

Prayer should be something that comes not from the heart but from the head. You must pray the same things, the same phrases, over and over, for this will make you

more comfortable, and comfort is always the goal of the ineffective Christian. During the worship service it is fine to bow or even kneel, but your mind must not be on the words you are praying but on the mental images of your ballgame, your dinner or the department store you could visit while the kids are in Sunday school.

Since you think about so many other things when you pray, keep your prayers short and to the point. "I want _____ and _____. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Scripture to Avoid:

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ineffective Hymn:

Sweet Minute of Prayer
Sweet minute of prayer, sweet
minute of prayer,
That's just about all that I can
spare.

I have regrets and lots of sin
So I'll see if I can squeeze them
in.

In sea-sons of dis-tress and grief
My greatest prayer is quick relief.
But things are swell, I've no
despair,
I'll just spend half a minute in
prayer. [†]

Butterfly Parishioners

By Dale Hanson Bourke

LOYALTY is fleeting in today's world. No one knows that more than retailers and pastors.

Merchants call them "butterfly customers," because they flit from store to store in search of better service. In fact, *Butterfly Customers* (Wiley) is the title of a book by Susan O'Dell and Joan Pajunen that describes the trend in the erosion of loyalty that historically kept people coming back to do business with those they knew and trusted.

Pastors may not have a name for this kind of person, but they

see a surprisingly similar trend in churches: People come and go from congregations with remarkable frequency.

Some even attend more than one church at a time, going to the worship service at one and a Bible study or Sunday school at another. One minister told me, "I have people in my church who like our Protestant Sunday school, but then leave to go to Catholic Mass."

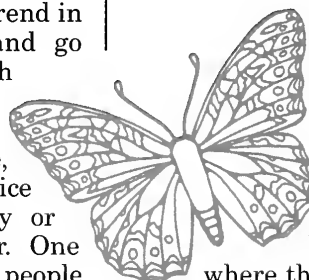
The trend is frustrating to pastors, who strive to build a congregation that can function as a com-

munity. And it creates a tendency among churches to "compete."

All of this might sound like more evidence of consumer-driven theology, except that the needs of any one family may be more than any one church can satisfy.

Take my own family, for example. My husband, the intellectual, likes a church where the preacher delivers a reasoned, well-prepared sermon. I prefer a practical application and value the diversity of a city-oriented church.

We had finally found a church
(continued on next page)





LOVE: The Inescapable Fact of God's Nature

By Kenneth Sullivan

A MAN riding in the country saw on a farmer's barn a weather vane on which were inscribed the words, "God is Love." He went to the farmer and asked him, "What do you mean by that? Do you think God's love is changeable—that it veers about as that arrow turns in the winds?"

The farmer replied, "Oh, no! I mean that whatever way the wind blows, God is still love."

It is difficult in our culture to comprehend or accept God's love. We live in a time when love has been reduced to hormones, infatuation, manipulation, and distortion. It is viewed as a temporary emotion, which is abandoned as quickly as one would discard a Kleenex tissue.

By contrast, the Bible presents God's love as an absolute of His character—unchangeable, constant, and relentless in its pursuit

of each person. God's love for each individual is the inescapable fact of His divine nature. It is the power of His love reaching out to us that gives us the capacity to love and to be loved. "We love," the Bible teaches, "because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Surrounded as we are by the selfishness and self-centeredness of the human condition, we find it difficult to imagine a Being who would love us unconditionally. Yet, God reaches through our sin and brokenness to embrace each of us with His grace and to extend to every one of us the wonder of His love in Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance" (2 Thess. 3:5, *NIV*). The Greek word for "direct" implies the removal of any barrier that would prevent you from experi-

encing God's love. At the cross of Christ, God spread wide His arms to receive and embrace you, to forgive your sins, to fill you with life, and to make you His own.

As we stand before Christ's cross, all we can offer God are the shattered remnants of an empty life, the sin that enslaves us, and the faded image of divine purpose within us. But because of Christ's death for our sins, His resurrection, and His intercessory ministry, God fills the empty hands of faith with the power of His saving grace and love.

May the Lord "direct your hearts into God's love." May you know and experience it in all its fullness. And may God's love touch others through you. [†]

*This article by Rev. Ken Sullivan appeared in the February 1997 issue of **The Brethren Monitor**, the newsletter of the Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church. It was written by Rev. Sullivan while he was pastor of the Milledgeville congregation. Ken died unexpectedly a few months later, on May 21, 1997. He has gone on to experience the immediate presence of God's love.*

(continued from previous page)

that satisfied both our preferences when our children began to have ideas of their own.

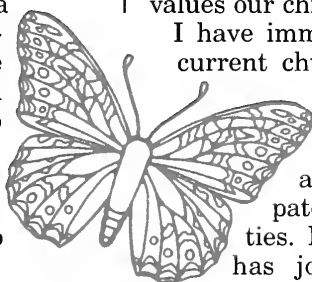
My teenage son began to notice that several of his friends attended a suburban church of the same denomination. It has a youth program with non-stop activities, a huge Sunday school class, and enough weekend trips to keep him entertained in a wholesome way all through high school. He has decided he wants to attend that church.

Of course, any parent is thrilled to hear a teenager actually asking to go to church, but his interest has created a dilemma for the family. Do we drop him off at Sunday school and race into town to attend our church? Or do we all

attend the suburban Sunday school and then go to the city church to worship?

Do we continue to support the city church because we value what it stands for, or do we embrace the suburban church because it values our children?

I have immense loyalty to our current church, yet no parent can underestimate the value of a group that encourages teens to participate in positive activities. In short, our family has joined the rank of church butterflies, flitting back and forth between churches, frustrated by our own lack of loyalty but unsure of how to resolve the situation. Like every other day of the week, Sunday now has to be coordinated to be sure we arrive



at the right place for the right activity. I've been honest with our current pastor, and to his credit he has not tried to talk us out of our commute. But he is saddened by it, he says, and so am I.

Butterfly customers may frustrate retailers, but they don't cause real harm. Butterfly parishioners, however, fly in the face of what congregations are meant to be, undoing the very fabric of a church community and creating a smorgasbord approach to worship.

It's not good for a church or a family. But at least for now, we have joined the ranks of congregation hoppers, grateful for what we receive from both churches, apologetic for what we take away. [†]

Dale Hanson Bourke is the author of Turn Toward the Wind and publisher of Religion News Service.

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"Behold, I make all things new"

Ronald W. Waters explores opportunities
for renewal in The Brethren Church.

IN THE BOOK of the Revelation, the Apostle John reports that he saw a new heaven and a new earth. Our Lord, the one seated on the throne of heaven and the universe, told John, "See, I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Rome (Rom. 8:18-30), described the groaning of creation for the time described by John—the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will return and restore all of creation to its rightful condition.

I, too, long for that great day when "Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation." Do you?

Christ is tarrying for a reason

But in the meantime, I believe our Lord is tarrying for a particular reason. Again, in the book of the Revelation, John records an important moment in the future.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Revelation 7:9-10, NIV

I believe the delay in Jesus' return is to allow for more people to be introduced into His kingdom.

And He has entrusted to us, His church, the opportunity to be making those introductions.

Unfortunately, too few churches are engaged effectively in evangelism and outreach. In the United States, 81 out of every 100 churches is either on a plateau or declining. Of the 19 churches that are growing, 18 are growing largely through persons transferring in from other congregations. That leaves only one church out of every 100 that is effectively reaching the unreached with the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Brethren Church National Office is partnering with congregations in a variety of ways to encourage renewal and revitalization that leads to the unsaved hearing and responding to the gospel. These include:

- **The Leadership Mentoring Project.** This spring ten Brethren congregations have been paired with an outside mentor to work through a revitalization project. Though all will begin with a common process, it will be adapted to meet local needs. Through this process, congregations will study the sources of authority for the church; develop a congregational identity statement; formalize a listing of the congregational core values, leading to writing a mission statement and developing a philosophy of ministry; devise a congregational and community profile that will help in formation of a vision statement for the next 5-10 years;

and result ultimately in short- and long-range plans for congregational ministry within the surrounding community.

This pilot program will be expanded next year, with the goal of making it available eventually to every Brethren church.

- **LIFE Process.** This two-year process, described in an adjoining article (*see next page*), will help congregations grow in their understanding of and heart for reaching their communities for the Lord.

- **New Life Ministries.** We have entered into a partnership with three other denominations for resourcing in evangelism, church growth and vitality, and, possibly in the future, resourcing for church planting. In addition to working together to develop the LIFE process, New Life Ministries partners are developing a series of regional seminars and training events and training modules addressing specific congregational needs. New Life Ministries is the successor to The Andrew Center and will expand our resources for congregational outreach.

- **One-day workshops and retreats.** These training events are being developed by the national office staff and will be offered in partnership with districts for the benefit of congregations and individuals. Watch for announcements of training events in your district during the next year.

The National Office staff and the Congregational Ministries Council want to work with your church in discovering new life and vitality. Please take advantage of these ministries, or call us to talk about how we may work with your church to discover the resources or services that will meet your particular needs. Our goal is to serve you, so that together we may be part of the renewing work of Christ on earth.

The Brethren Church National Office

524 College Ave.,
Ashland, OH 44805
419-289-1708 (phone)
419-281-0450 (fax)

Brethren@bright.net (e-mail)

For questions specifically about evangelism/church growth, call:
419-289-5771

"Have a Heart" Month

February is the month for the annual emphasis on evangelism in The Brethren Church. In addition to conducting special outreach ministries, congregations are encouraged to take a "Have a Heart for the Lost" offering. One-half of this offering is used for local church



outreach ministries. The other half is given to The Brethren Church National Office to support denominational evangelism emphases.

If your congregation does not receive an offering, you may send a contribution to:

"Have a Heart" Offering
The Brethren Church
524 College Ave.
Ashland, OH 44805

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



March-April 1998

Volume 11, Number 4

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). I read this verse in a book that my son and daughter-in-law, Glenn and Sarah, gave me for Christmas. The title of the book is *Joy in the Journey*. It made me think of the many blessings I receive every day.

I have had the flu and, since my immune system is still weak, I can't fight off things as quickly. I got an ear infection along with the flu, and the cough I had lingered on for three weeks. I missed one week of work and, each day as I laid in bed, I tried to count my blessings. Being thankful for Tylenol®, cough syrup, and antibiotics, I tried to remind myself that this soon would pass and that I really had a lot to be thankful for, even as I laid in bed and coughed!

I counted it a blessing when I was able to return to work. I reminded myself that there were many people in hospitals really sick. Sometimes we only think on the negatives and forget all of the positives.

We sing the song, "Count Your Blessings":

*Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one
And it will surprise you
What the Lord has done.*

Do we ever stop and list our blessings (count them)? Yes, we will be
(continued on page 4)

The Many-Sided Christ

"But whom do you say I am?"

Our Christ challenges the world by His many sides. He meets the needs of all classes and conditions of men. As deep answers unto deep, so does He respond to the moving of each soul of mankind.

If we were to call the roll of the world's workers today and ask them, "What think ye of Christ?" their answers would be something like these:

To the artist, He is the One Altogether Lovely.

To the architect, He is the Chief Cornerstone.

To the baker, He is the Living Bread.

To the banker, He is the Hidden Treasure.

To the doctor, He is the Great Physician.

To the educator, He is the Great Teacher.

To the farmer, He is the Sower and the Lord of the Harvest.

To the florist, He is the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon.

To the geologist, He is the Rock of Ages.

To the judge, He is the Righteous Judge.

To the lawyer, He is the Counselor, the Lawgiver, the Advocate.

To the newspaper man, He is the good Tidings of Great Joy.

To the philanthropist, He is the Unspeakable Gift.

To the philosopher, He is the Wisdom of God.

To the preacher, He is the Word of God.

To the lonely, He is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

To the servant, He is the good Master.

To the toiler, He is the Giver of Rest.

To the sorrowing, He is the Comforter.

To the bereaved, He is the Resurrection and the Life.

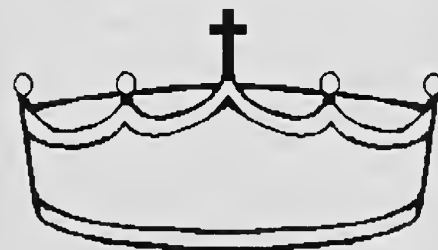
To the sinner, He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

To the Christian, He is the Son of the Living God, Saviour, Redeemer, and Lord.

Author Unknown

But whom do YOU say that I am?
"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Matthew 16:16

Jesus is Lord



This reading was found in a book bought at Helen Shively's auction by Nancy Icenhour. The reading bears the notation, "Copied from the scrapbook of Mrs. J. Milton Bowman," who is another saint!

In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

Two faithful leaders of the National Women's Missionary Society and prior to that of the National Sisterhood of Mary and Martha are now with the Lord.

Mrs. Delbert Flora (Romaine) died January 19, 1998. Mrs. Flora was the representative from the W.M.S. to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church and served as treasurer for over a dozen years.

Mrs. J. Ray Klingensmith (Christine) died February 2, 1998. Mrs. Klingensmith was the national patroness of SMM.

Both ladies were members of W.M.S. as long as their health permitted; their interest and concern never waned. To many, they were mentors and examples of a Christian walk.

We are thankful for their lives.

SOCIETY SISTERS

In the January-February *Newsletter*, Linda Immel wrote about the love and support the new society in North Manchester received from their Sister Society in Goshen, the Chantal Circle. Cynthia Stout, the district president, submitted this information about Society Sisters:

"Last summer the Indiana District initiated the 'Society Sisters' program. Slips of paper with the name of each W.M.S. in our district were placed in a 'hat.' The district officers randomly picked pairs and these societies became 'sisters.'

"This brainstorm of the district officers has many objectives. Our primary desire is for the ladies to become better acquainted through correspondence and joint meetings (for societies who live near one another). The ladies will have special opportunities to fellowship together during District Conference 1998. It is suggested the ladies share photos and information about their society and each member. We also would like the sisters to share ideas for programs, mission projects, raising money, community and local church service projects, ideas for public service programs, and Mother-Daugh-

ter banquets. The ladies are encouraged to share prayer and praise concerns and to generally uplift one another.

"I was privileged to visit our newly formed society, 'Circle of Friends,' in North Manchester. What a thrill it was when they shared notes they had received from their society sister, Goshen Chantal Circle. This is just one example of how the 'Society Sisters' program can bless individual societies as well as the district as a whole. If the ladies of the Indiana District feel that this program is beneficial, then we will draw from the 'hat' again at District Conference and each society will receive their new 'Sister' for 1998-1999.

"I want to encourage other districts to try this program or something similar to draw the local societies closer to one another. Distance is not a barrier; the groups do not have to meet together. The U.S. Postal Service is a wonderful tool to bridge the miles between our dear ladies. God's Word gives us this example through Paul's letters. God bless you, as you draw closer to Him and closer to each other."

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

The United States is the only country which observes a National Day of Prayer. The specific day set aside is the first Thursday of May; this year the date is May 7.

Always our country needs prayer. Now things seem more critical than I remember in other years. Should your community be organized in observance, I ask you to support in every way you can. However, if nothing is planned, you do it! Begin in your self, your home, neighborhood, or church. The organization part can be simple. Pray specifically for our national leaders, the Cabinet, the Supreme Court justices, your governor and state leaders, your local officials, commissioners, City Council, your school board. Satan is wiggling into all facets of our country through his evil ways. We need to pray that these elected/appointed leaders depend upon the Lord for guidance and wisdom.

Ladies, I am pleased to introduce to you . . .

NANCY

Nancy Hunn is the new editor of the W.M.S. *Devotional Guide*. Nancy has a Master's Degree in Music from Indiana University, but works in her own computer desktop publishing business, Image Communications. She does design and layout for newsletters, brochures, business cards, etc. Perhaps you have seen two of her Brethren projects: the Andrew Center magazine, *New Beginnings*, and the cover of Dr. Jerry Flora's book, *The Message of Faith*.

Nancy uses her music abilities in the church as organist/pianist and choir member. Her hobbies include making crafts of all kinds, reading, and painting watercolors.

Nancy is married to the Rev. Kenneth Hunn, pastor of the Nappanee First Brethren Church, where they have served for about 7½ years. They have three children: Andrew, 17; Carol, 16; and Jonathan, 13.

Nancy has served the W.M.S. as general secretary. Upon the resignation of Jeanette Sullivan last summer, the Board appointed Nancy to fill the editor's position of the *Devotional Guide*. She is responsible for selecting the program theme for next year, asking writers to comply with her request of preparing an article pertaining to the theme, and then coordinating articles, artwork, and other program suggestions with the appropriate month. This is not an easy task!

We ask you to support Nancy with your prayers and encouraging notes. Should she ask you to help in any way, we hope you will say "yes."

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Subscription price, \$7.50 per year in advance.

Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, Rd 5, Ashland, OH 44805

Women's Outlook Newsletter

Societies' Activities

Annually each W.M.S. is asked to submit a written report of their ministry during the year. These are some of the examples which show that we are Women Meant to Serve:

INDIANA

Bryan Susannah —
Sponsored a community ladies' day with Marilyn Aspinall as speaker
Burlington —
Sponsored the Mother-Daughter banquet with Emma Fritz from Warsaw speaking from the Word of God and demonstrating her artwork of decorating eggs
College Corner —
Baby quilts were made and lap quilts were made in local high school colors. Proceeds were given to the district project
Corinth —
Each member was a secret pal for the senior high youth. They finally met each other at a special supper
Flora —
Assisted in several activities in Brethren Healthcare: sewing, fish fry, July birthday party and Christmas program with refreshments; Christmas cheer plates to shut-ins and church-affiliated servicemen; work at local Thrift shop and Carroll County food pantry
Huntington —
The Mother-Daughter banquet was a spaghetti dinner prepared and served by the men
Loree I —
Continued their annual ornament exchange, sponsored a Sr. Citizens ice cream social, silent auction, and World Relief potato bake
Meadowcrest —
Proceeds from a holiday bazaar supported their orphan child in India
Mexico —
Used skits, geographic, and cultural studies of missionary fields to spark interest in their meetings
Milford —
Raised missionary offerings by sponsoring silent auction and white elephant sales; other offerings are given to Greenwood Fellowship and an abused women shelter
Nappanee —
Prepared and served the Mother-Daughter dinner for another church, used the theme "Gifts and Fruit of

the Spirit" for their Mother-Daughter banquet, served the father/son breakfast and used a sports theme, prepared and gave Christmas gifts and dinner to a family

North Manchester —
Sponsored a soup luncheon after worship; proceeds from the free-will offering were designated for the national project
Oakville —
Made Christmas gifts for the residents at Brethren Healthcare
Peru —
Made and sent bibs and lap robes for nursing homes, sewing kits and school kits for International Aid; proceeds from selling quilts go to different mission fields.
Roanoke —
Prepared and sold apple dumplings
Wabash —
Provided periodic breakfasts for the men's fellowship

FLORIDA

Sarasota —
Visited the Crisis Center for unwed girls and gave baby items

ARIZONA

Tucson —
Held two rummage sales, proceeds were designated for missions and church needs

CENTRAL

Milledgeville —
Sponsored a craft night to encourage outreach: 2 or 3 projects were suggested which could be completed in one evening; made "ugly quilts" for an organization in Sterling, gave lap robes to a nursing home and to the shelter for battered women

SOUTHEAST

Bethlehem —
Instead of a traditional Mother/Daughter program, they had a women's dinner at a restaurant and each invited an unchurched friend or co-worker; encouragement cards are signed at each meeting for absent members and friends; personal notes are written to others
Hagerstown —
Made palm crosses for entire church membership and nursing home residents for Palm Sunday; combined picnic with St. James society and families

Linwood —

Used a "Stay at Home" tea theme for the World Day of Prayer, appropriate materials were provided and members were encouraged to spend specific prayer time for world and national needs, but to stay at home

Maurertown —

"School Days" was the W.M.S. banquet theme, decorations included lunch pails, yearbooks, and miscellaneous items from bygone days

Oak Hill —

Sponsored a rummage sale with proceeds designated for remodeling the ladies restroom, SE camp program, and Riverside teachers' gifts

St. James —

Sold candy and contributed funds for two prayer huts in India and training of an Indian pastor; hosted a baby shower for the Crisis Center

OHIO

Gretna —

Focused on one missionary family for the year in an effort to become better acquainted with them; 225 dozen Christmas cookies were sold with proceeds designated for the church mortgage

New Lebanon —

Sold hanging baskets for Mother's day; used "Mother Goose Reborn" theme, based on *Christian Mother Goose* by Marjorie A. Decker, for their mother-daughter banquet

Park Street Joy —

Used four special speakers to enhance devotional programs: a county commissioner, a food expert, a tight-waddery specialist, and a dried flowers and potpourri specialist

Trinity Jr. —

Participated in Passing on the Promise, an exciting program!

Trinity Sr. —

Contributed cookies and packed boxes with cookies and personal items for each member of the Philomatheon Society of the Blind at Christmas

Williamstown —

Sponsored a toy shower for children at Riverside school

MIDWEST

Mulvane —

Supported the Sisterhood organization. The girls prepared Christmas

(continued on page 4)

Missionary Miscellany

Congratulations to Tom and Debbie Sprowls in Medina! Their twins were born Friday, January 30. Leah Rose weighed 7 pounds and Levi Paul weighed 6 pounds, 9 ounces. Luke, the big brother, is happy. They are a marvelous answer to hundreds of prayers!

Reilly (Director of Missionary Ministries) and Cindy Smith visited India and Malaysia on a missionary tour in January and February. They attended the annual conference in Rajahmundry, India; Prasanth Kumar baptized 107 people following the conference!

The Prayer and Praise bulletin from the Missionary Ministries Council highlights new mission locations in Ohio: Mike and Pam Sove at Northview Brethren Life Church in Franklin; Tom and Debbie Sprowls at the Living HOPE Brethren Church in Medina; Ron and Sandy Miller, who are leading a church planting team at the Living Waters Community Church in Mansfield; and a site in Delaware County. These are the February missionaries-of-the-month.

In addition to these, other districts are also planting churches. Arizona: Jim and Ann Miller will move from Carmel, Indiana, to Phoenix in the summer to plant Oasis Community Church. Joining them will be Glenn and Sarah Black from Nappanee. Indiana: Jim and Elaine Thomas at Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship at Grissom AFB; California: Jim and Stephanie Boyd at Rock Springs Community Church in Vista; Southeast: Mike and Barbara Woods of Grace Community Church in Winchester, Virginia. Continue your prayers for each church planter and team.

The March missionaries are Karina and Claudio Castelli in Paraguay. Also in March are Sonia and Miguel Antunez in Peru.

The April missionaries are the Thomases at Eagle's Nest (mentioned above) and the pastors at Winning the Race Ministries in Indianapolis: Tom and Tiona Conrad and Keith and Marjorie Bennett.

President's Pen *(continued)*

surprised!! Let's not let our troubles crowd around us so that we cannot see the many blessings we daily receive from the Lord. In Proverbs 10:22, we read: "The blessing of the LORD makes one rich and He adds no sorrow with it."

We received word from Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar in India that their son, Sudhir, was married on January 10. They also wrote that their son-in-law, Vincent, is attending a seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was a surprise to us. His wife, Shanti, was born in Ashland while Prasanth was a seminary student. Shanti and their daughter, Shirley-na, will join Vincent later. We are very excited to see them. More blessings from the Lord!!

We are half way through our W.M.S. year. It won't be long before we begin talking about National Conference. Vice-President Marilyn Aspinall has been busy for months, planning for the devotional speaker, special music, and the luncheon. Mark the dates: August 3-7.

What are some things you are doing in your local W.M.S. group? I do wish you would share with us. We really want to hear from you. Something you are doing may be just what another W.M.S. group needs to encourage their members. Wouldn't you like to be an encourager? OK, send a note to Joan Ronk and she will put your suggestion in the W.M.S. Newsletter.

Remember: Count Your Blessings!

God Bless You.



Shirley Black

Societies' Activities *(continued)*

stockings for the Care and Share ministry for the needy, fixed packages for the homeless men at the Rescue Mission in Wichita, they personalized John 3:16 and prayed for each one as he received his package; made school kits through World Vision; sent vitamins to the Kumars and 50 Bibles to the Antunez family.

And many, many more outreach opportunities! Yes, we are Women Meant to Serve.

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Conference missionaries will be Allen Baer from Argentina and Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri, who were sent by the Argentine church to serve in Colombia.

In Shirley's letter you have read her desire to share your activities. The information you submitted last year is compiled into this issue, so you may learn what other societies did. We were busy ladies! But don't stop there! Much work needs to be done and whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord. If you see a need, fill it. Sometimes we wait for a committee or an organization to say, Do this or Do that. You be the one to do it!

At this time, Shirley is undergoing radiation treatments for a tumor in her brain. She had concluded her treatments following the masectomy last year and we rejoiced in her healing. We rejoice again in knowing that the bone scan did not reveal any other spot. Continue to pray for her healing and complete recovery. Her faith in the Great Physician is strong.

Cynthia Stout's report of Society Sisters is an easy idea to duplicate in every district. And, in districts which are small, societies can cross district lines and become sisters.

If you have read Barbara Johnson's *Living Somewhere Between Estrogen and Death*, you know she includes lots of sense and nonsense! Refer to page 40 before you plant your garden this spring. If you want to do something, read page 65 and then begin. Pages 110-111 give wisdom for you who "want to make a difference in the world," as suggested by Max Lucado, and be a mentor. On page 154, read the encouraging paragraphs about encouragement. Barbara continues to tell you how to be an encourager. It's easy.

Remember the project offering for this year is designated for the Eden Bible Institute in Argentina.

Your friend,



Joan

Introducing LIFE

(Living in Faithful Evangelism)

By Ronald W. Waters

AS CHURCHES were completing the Passing On the Promise (POtP) process, many people were asking if there would be life after POtP. We're happy now to announce a resounding "Yes, there is LIFE after Passing On the Promise!"

In fact, you could say, "LIFE is Passing On the Promise for a new generation!"

LIFE (Living in Faithful Evangelism) is a new, two-year congregational growth process, similar to Passing On the Promise—but with totally new study materials and themes. The Brethren Church is a major partner in developing this new process, along with evangelicals from the Church of the Brethren, the Mennonite Church, and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The new process will be available for congregational implementation beginning in September 1998.

LIFE's four themes

The LIFE process moves through four themes that invite us to:

- *Discover* a vision for personal and congregational outreach;
- *Welcome* new people to come to Christ and the church;
- *Share* the joy and blessing of faith in Jesus Christ with others;
- *Expand* our experience of Christian community among ourselves and with persons new to the faith and the congregation.

Living in Faithful Evangelism is designed to help an entire congregation develop a lifestyle that is committed to reaching persons in its community with the message of Jesus Christ. To that end, the process includes these features:

1. **Lay leadership**—the congregation will select two persons to serve as *congregational co-coordinators* to guide the church through the process. The *pastor* is a vital part of the team serving as a key facilitator

and an "up-front" cheerleader for the process. But the lay co-coordinators give direction to LIFE.

2. **Community and congregational self-study**—LIFE includes a tool for developing a profile of the church and the community, completed by a special task force. After gathering data, the task force develops an initial analysis of the findings. Then an outside consultant will review the findings and make suggestions to assist the church in developing its own outreach strategy.

3. **Study/action modules**—the two-year process includes four study/action modules. Each module includes three elements: 1) a theme emphasis event to introduce the module and to build interest; 2) a 13-week curriculum designed for use in adult Sunday school classes and/or special study groups (may also be used in older youth classes); and 3) a congregational outreach activity to put the learning into action.

4. **An annual growth workshop**—at the conclusion of each year of the LIFE process, the congregation conducts a church-wide growth workshop. This workshop provides an opportunity to incorporate the learning from the previous study/action curriculum units and the self-study research in devising specific ministry and outreach plans for the coming year.

Who should consider LIFE?

The LIFE introductory materials include a LIFE Readiness Assessment to help congregational leaders consider whether this is the appropriate time to begin the process.

Certainly churches that did not participate in Passing On the Promise should consider the LIFE process. In many cases, Passing On the Promise churches came to a

new commitment among their members to evangelism and community outreach. A process such as LIFE helps a congregation as a whole move together toward such a commitment. In many cases, it has also resulted in numerical growth.

Churches that participated in Passing On the Promise may also consider the LIFE process for one of these reasons: 1) If the congregation did not take full advantage of POtP, failing to use the study curriculum among a large percentage



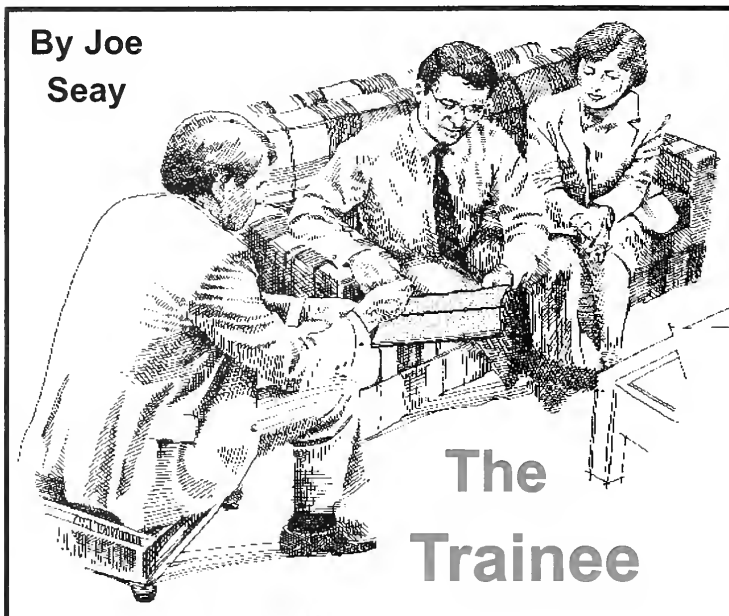
of its members, LIFE will allow another opportunity for broad-based exposure to growth and outreach training. 2) If the congregation has reached many new people since Passing On the Promise, LIFE will provide the means to build an outreach and growth mindset in these folks as well. 3) Some congregations find that repeated exposure to a process such as LIFE/Passing On the Promise enhances attitudes and behaviors regarding evangelism and church growth.

Because the curriculum materials are all new, churches who participated in Passing On the Promise can enter into the LIFE process without repeating previous courses.

A helpful LIFE introductory pack, including an informative video, is available. Ask your pastor if your church has requested this introductory pack. If not, contact the Brethren Church National Office (524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805; 419-289-1708; FAX 419-281-0450; or e-mail at Brethren@bright.net) for your free copy. Or you will find the introductory material (but not the video) on the Internet at <http://www.ashland.edu/~rwaters/life.htm>. [✠]

Rev. Waters, assistant professor of evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary, serves The Brethren Church as Consultant for Evangelism/Church Growth.

By Joe
Seay



“JOE, I hope you will be part of our evangelism class starting this Wednesday,” my pastor said to me as we chatted after the morning services.

I hardly gave his request a serious thought, and yet, Wednesday night found me in the evangelism class. For some reason that I could not explain, I felt I should be there.

That’s how, after a few weeks of training, I found myself standing beside my pastor as we made our first home evangelism call together. My pastor had called, and the family had agreed to “talk with us.”

The presentation

After a few minutes of pleasant conversation, my pastor smiled and very gently said, “I would like to talk with you about something very important. Would that be okay?”

The young couple nodded and said, “Sure.”

My pastor called them by name and said in a soft but serious tone of voice, “Some day every person who has ever lived, including Joe and I, will stand before God. When that happens, we will be welcomed into heaven or cast into hell.”

To me it seemed to get very quiet. There was a long silence. I began looking for the door, just in case we needed to leave in a hurry.

Then my pastor softly and gently asked, “Would you like to know for sure that when you die, you will go to heaven?”

They both nodded yes.

I relaxed and listened as my pastor opened his well-worn Bible and began to explain how they could know they were going to heaven. He read Acts 3:19, “Repent, then, and turn to God . . .” He then explained that everyone has

sinned, and he showed them Romans 3:23, “. . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

As the mother and father listened intensely, the two small children grew restless. I quickly slid from the couch onto the floor and played with them quietly.

My pastor then turned to John 3:16 and read, “For God so loved [us] that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

“The key word,” he explained, is ‘believe.’”

Next he showed them 1 John 1:9, which states that, if we confess our sins, God will forgive us.

From John 1:12 he shared that they, too, could receive Christ. He looked up from his reading, smiled, and asked, “Would you like to receive Christ tonight?”

I flinched. Kinda pushy, I thought.

But mom and dad were nodding their heads as they shed tears of repentance! As my pastor led them in prayer, I wept too and asked God to forgive me for my lack of faith.

New creations

My pastor turned in his Bible to 2 Corinthians 5:17 and showed these new converts that they were now new creations. “The old is gone,” he said, “and now you are a new creation in Christ.”

As we left rejoicing that night, I had a new zeal to become a soul-winner, like my pastor.

It was several weeks later, after more training and Bible study, that my pastor told me it was my turn to take the lead and talk to people about how they could know they were going to heaven.

“I’m not ready yet,” I responded.

“I’ll be right there with you, and I’ll be praying for you,” he reassured me.

As we approached the house, I had an urge to turn and run. I felt nervous and uncertain. I looked at my pastor, standing behind me. He was smiling. I knew I could not let him down. He had confidence in me.

I rang the doorbell, hoping that no one would be at home. But the door opened, and we were invited in.

We visited for a little while. Then I looked at my pastor. He nodded and smiled. It was time. I swallowed hard and breathed a silent prayer.

I didn’t do as well as I had hoped I would. I stumbled and stammered sometimes. But I could see my pastor praying for me, so I continued. When I asked them if they would like to receive Jesus as their Savior, I was pleasantly surprised when they said, “Yes.”

Some continue to say “Yes”

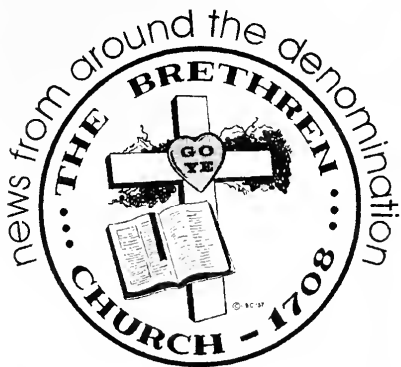
It’s been several years now since that first time. I have had some people say yes and some say no in that time. A few people have refused to let me in. Some have told me to mind my own business. And a few have even been rude. But thank God, some continue to say, “Yes!”

I am now retired and have moved to a different state, but I’m still asking those same questions. And I’m still getting some people who say yes and some who say no.

As you read this article, you too can receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and become a new creation in Jesus Christ!

On the other hand, if you are already a new creation in Jesus Christ, then perhaps it’s time for you to become a “trainee” in an evangelism class. Acts 1:8 says, “You will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth.” [†]

Mr. Seay is a free-lance writer who lives in Greenbrier, Arkansas. The method of evangelism he describes is just one of many ways of “Having a Heart for the Lost.”



New pastor welcomed by Cornerstone Church

Muncie, Ind. — Members of Cornerstone Brethren Church and Ministries recently welcomed Dr. Tim Dwyer as their new pastor.

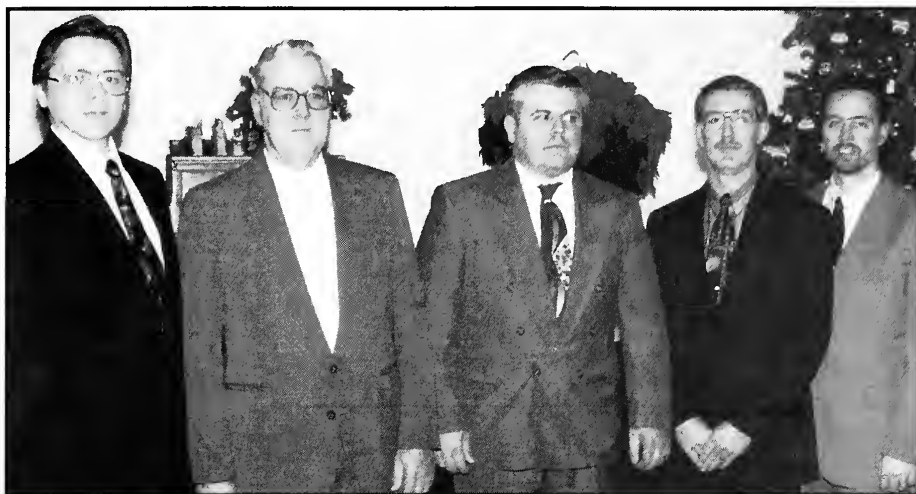
Since 1990, Dr. Dwyer has been on the faculty of nearby Anderson University as professor of Old Testament, where he continues to teach. Prior to that, he pastored in California, served as a jail chaplain, and taught at Azusa Pacific University.

He is a graduate of San Jose City College, Azusa Pacific University, Talbot Theological Seminary, and has a Ph.D. degree in New Testament from Aberdeen University in Scotland.

For the past 14 years, Pastor Dwyer has been married to Paula Rosine Dwyer. Mrs. Dwyer is a writer and an aerobics and aquatics instructor. They are the parents of two sons, Peter (7) and Philip (4).

Cornerstone Brethren Church and Ministries held its first meeting October 1, 1995, and dedicated its first worship facility October 5, 1997 (see November *EVANGELIST* p. 9).

— reported by Roberta Covington



Participating in the commissioning service for Robert French (c.) and Timothy Lewis (2nd from r.) were Rev. T.J. McLaughlin (l.), Rev. Robert Hoffman (2nd from l.), and Rev. Bryan Karchner (r.).

Timothy Lewis, Robert French commissioned for ministry at Brush Valley Brethren Church

Adrian, Pa. — Timothy Lewis and Robert French were commissioned as Ministers in The Brethren Church in a service held December 7 at Brush Valley Brethren Church, where both men are members.

Rev. Bryan Karchner, pastor of the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church and a member of the Pennsylvania District Board of Oversight, conducted the commissioning service. He was assisted by Brethren Elders Robert Hoffman and T.J. McLaughlin, and by Rev. Terry Music, interim pastor of the Brush Valley congregation.

As Commissioned Ministers Mr. Lewis and Mr. French are authorized to preach and teach the Gospel, to assist with Communion services, to conduct funeral services, to do pastoral calling (as directed by an ordained elder), and

to receive the confession of faith of new believers.

Timothy Lewis (45) has been a member of the Brush Valley Church for about 12 years. He serves the congregation as moderator, trustee, and deacon. He is employed at Forringer Truck and Auto Parts, where he is manager. He and his wife Debbie have three daughters ranging in age from 24 to 8.

Robert French (46) has been a member at Brush Valley since childhood. He is assistant moderator and a deacon and has also served the congregation as trustee, Sunday school teacher and youth leader. He is employed as a transportation team leader for Allegheny Power and attends Geneva College, from which he will graduate this summer. He and his wife Diana have three sons ranging in age from 22 to 15. [†]

Eagles' Nest becomes a class

Bunker Hill, Ind. — Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship, the new Brethren church being started at the former Grissom Air Force Base near Peru, Ind., was granted a class charter by the Executive Board of the Brethren Church at its November meeting. Class status is the first step in becoming a Brethren church.

Rev. Jim Thomas and his wife Elaine are the church planters for this new congregation. They are currently raising support and developing a core-group of people. They expect to launch public services in the fall of this year.

Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship will be a Brethren church serving a broad-based community where no other churches now exist. [†]



Retreat planned in April for Brethren pastors and wives

Lanark, Ill. — Interlaken Resort and Country Spa near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, will be the site of this year's retreat for Brethren pastors and their wives, which will be held April 28-30.

The retreat will be a time of both spiritual enrichment and relaxation. The featured speaker will be Dr. David Reese, a medical doctor who is a member of the Lanark, Ill., Brethren Church. Dr. Reese, a student of both science and Scripture, will speak on the biblical account of creation, providing a fresh understanding of this narrative.

The cost of the retreat is \$230.00 for couples and \$180.00 for singles, which covers two nights at the resort, two breakfasts, and two dinners. The retreat will begin Tuesday afternoon, April 28, and conclude by noon on Thursday. Registration forms have been sent directly to pastors. For more information, contact Pastor Jim Garrett at 815-493-2390.

Churches are encouraged to provide time off and financial assistance so that pastors and their wives can attend the retreat. [†]

Pastor takes congregation out for Christmas dinner

Quicksburg, Va. — Forty-nine members and friends of the Liberty Brethren Church were treated to a buffet dinner on Sunday, December 14, after the morning worship service by Pastor Doc Shank and his wife Jean.

This is an annual Christmas event, by which the Shanks show their appreciation to the Liberty congregation. By coincidence, this year's dinner fell on Mrs. Shank's birthday.

Loy Didawick, a local vocalist, provided entertainment during

Christians urged to pray for revival and spiritual awakening during *PrayUSA! '98*, March 1-April 9

Houston, Tex. — Hundreds of America's Christian leaders are calling for 40 days of fasting and prayer for revival and spiritual awakening during *PrayUSA! '98*, March 1 to April 9.

On March 1, 1998, participants will begin synchronized praying through a 40-day prayer calendar. The prayer focus will be on America's churches, their pastors, and Christian leaders.

Participants will be urged to fast as well as pray. The biblical discipline of fasting has seen renewed interest in recent years, as pastors and laypersons alike forgo food for one to 40 days to develop a more intimate relationship with and deeper dependence upon God.

The need for a national fast stems from a lack of obedience to God in today's society. Bill Bright recently said, "There has never been a greater need in all of history for Christians to fast, pray, repent, and seek the face of God. We're asking God to send revival to our nation and the world to enable us to help fulfill the Great Commission."

PrayUSA! Coordinator Eddie Smith said, "This year we are seeking to initiate a praying presence in every U.S. zip code." He

is requesting that Christians adopt their zip code, or a portion of it, for prayer. They are being asked to register their intention with the national registry and to begin praying for and prayer-walking through their zip code area with the ultimate goal of praying for every person by the end of the year 2000. (To register, call 913-438-7303 or visit the website at www.map4JESUS.org.)

Any church or individual can participate in

PrayUSA! Single copies of the 40-day prayer calendar are available free from The Brethren Church National Office (call 419-289-1708). Quantities (at \$3.00 per dozen) may be ordered from *PrayUSA!* by calling 1-888-FASTING (1-888-327-8464). A *PrayUSA!* resource kit is also available for \$10.00.

PrayUSA! is an annual initiative sponsored by *Mission America Celebrate Jesus*. [†]

PrayUSA! '98
PRAYING
AMERICA
BACK
TO
GOD

March 1 - April 9

40 - DAYS
PRAYER & FASTING

the meal, which was held at the Johnny Appleseed Restaurant in New Market, Va. According to re-



Rev. Doc Shank (at left in left photo) entertains, while his wife Jean (at right in right photo) enjoys the meal.

porter Ramona Davis, the dinner and special entertainment were very much enjoyed by everyone. [†]





In Memory

Doris R. Stogsdill

Doris R. Stogsdill, 72, died January 17 in Tucson, Ariz., after a valiant struggle with cancer. Mrs. Stogsdill was the widow of Brethren pastor Rev. Clarence Stogsdill, who died May 26, 1992.

Wilma Doris Roy was born January 26, 1925, in Hamdon, Missouri, the daughter of Alber and Edna Roy. She and Clarence were married December 23, 1946.

She served the First Brethren Church in Tucson for 29 years (1963-92) along side her husband, as he pastored that congregation. She was also by his side when he served the Gretna (Bellefontaine, Ohio), Trinity (Canton, Ohio), Johnstown (Pa.) Third, and Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Churches.

In addition to her service to the church and to her family, she worked as payroll supervisor and as secretary to the vice president in charge of finance of Krueger Manufacturing from 1963 until 1990. Her children remember her as a woman of steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, of faithful prayer, and of constancy of love for her family.

She is survived by her two children and their spouses—Gwen and Scott McKinney, and Roger and Kimberly Stogsdill—and by four grandchildren (Seth and Ryan McKinney and Tiffany and Adam Stogsdill). Roger is the current pastor of Tucson First Brethren.

Her funeral service was held January 23 at the Tucson Church.

Kay M. Long

Kay Maureen Long (60), wife of Brethren Elder Norman D. Long, died December 2 in Ypsilanti, Mich., of pancreatic cancer.

Born Kay M. Chaney on December 9, 1936, in Sterling, Colo., she was raised in the Church of the Brethren, as was her future husband. They were married June 17, 1956. After

Christians challenged to saturate America with the Gospel by end of this millennium

Minneapolis, Minn. — As the millennium draws to a close, Christians are being challenged to take seriously the call to reach America with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thousands of Christians are accepting the challenge to make a concerted effort over the next three years to pray for their family and friends and then seek ways to share Jesus Christ with them.

Celebrate Jesus 2000, a national evangelism initiative of the *Mission America* coalition, is reminding Christians that the greatest reason to celebrate the new millennium is faith in Jesus Christ. *Celebrate Jesus 2000* asks Christians to work collaboratively to do what Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to do—to go and make disciples.

There is little doubt that our nation is in great need of spiritual awakening and renewal. There is no better time for Christians to come together to reach the nation for Christ than in the twilight years of the 20th Century.

Dr. Larry Lewis, national facilitator of *Celebrate Jesus 2000* says, "This is the first time in the history of our nation [that] we have come to the end of a millennium. We won't have that opportunity [again] for another 1,000 years. Certainly it behooves us to 'redeem the time' by doing our best to fulfill the Great Commission mandate to evangelize our nation."

Never before in the history of the American church have so many members of the Body of Christ

come together for the purpose of evangelism. Already 52 denominations have pledged to be a part of *Celebrate Jesus 2000* by promoting it in their local churches. More than 150,000 local congregations are expected to participate.

Dr. Lewis says, "If every one of those churches will do its part, bathing its church mission field in prayer and sharing the Gospel in every home, we can saturate America with the Gospel. The *Mission America* goal of praying for and sharing Christ with every person in America is reachable and doable. And if we can do it, we should do it!"

Celebrate Jesus 2000 recognizes that prayer is the most essential and the most effective resource in evangelism. Therefore Christians are being asked to pray for family, friends, and neighbors, and then to seek ways to share the Gospel with them through a brief, friendly, "threshold witness" or by lifestyle evangelism.

Public events such as city-wide or individual church crusades also will be held. An important part of this effort is effective follow-up with new believers to involve them in new or existing congregations for discipleship and fellowship. Christians will also be involved in demonstrating "love in action" by serving those in need in their communities.

Resource materials and suggestions for involvement in *Celebrate Jesus 2000*, including a Church Mobilization Kit, are available through *Mission America*. For more information, call 800-995-8572. [†]

serving congregations in the Church of the Brethren, her husband accepted a call in 1972 to pastor the Pittsburgh, Pa., First Brethren Church. They served there for 15 years. They later moved to Ypsilanti, where Rev. Long served for 9½ years as a chaplain in the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. (He retired last September.)

Surviving Mrs. Long in addition to her husband are a daughter, Cindy McCarthy and her husband Bill; a son, Lloyd and his wife

Coral; three grandchildren; and three step-grandchildren. [†]

World Relief Update

Malawi, Africa — World Relief is providing emergency food and shelter to 300 families made homeless by heavy rains in Malawi, a country in southeastern Africa.

When the rainy season ends in March, World Relief hopes to help villagers plant sweet potatoes, an early-maturing crop that will provide much-needed food. [†]



In Memory

Rev. Ronald B. Ritchey

Brethren pastor **Rev. Ronald B. Ritchey**, 65, of Berlin, Pa., died of cancer December 21 at Meadow View Nursing Center in Berlin. He



was pastor of the Cumberland, Md., First Brethren Church until his illness prevented him from serving.

He was born on March 18, 1932, in Johnstown, Pa., the son of Paul and Rae Lucille (Thomas) Ritchey. He was a graduate of Berlin High School (1950), Ashland College (1954), and Ashland Theological Seminary (1957).

In addition to the Cumberland Church, Rev. Ritchey served Brethren congregations in North Liberty, Ind., and Johnstown, Pa. (Third Brethren). He also served several churches in other denominations, including Trinity United Church of Christ in Roxbury, Pa., which he served while pastoring the Cumberland First Brethren Church. He also taught school for a time in Ohio.

He served on the board of Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Ky., worked with the school, and took more than 100 loads of donated items there. While serving in Johnstown, he was president of the Johnstown ministerial association and chaplain for the city council. In Berlin, he served as an EMT with the Hyndman, Pa., rescue squad.

He was married for 37 years to the former Margaret Adele Linsley, who survives him. Also surviving are their three children and their spouses—Paul and Deb Ritchey of

Ashland; John and Toni Ritchey of Baltimore, Md.; and Adele and David Merkel of Hyndman—as well as three grandchildren.

Rev. Ritchey donated his body to science for research. A memorial service was held December 27 at the Berlin Brethren Church with Pastor Bryan Karchner officiating and remarks by Rev. Norman Nightengal. Memorial contributions, which will be given to various mission works, may be sent to the Berlin Church.

Romayne K. Flora

Viavi Romayne K. Flora, 92, died January 19 at Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Ashland, Ohio. Mrs. Flora was the wife of Dr. Delbert B. Flora, a Brethren elder, pastor, and then professor and dean at Ashland Theological Seminary, who died August 31, 1995.

Romayne Keyes was born August 21, 1905, in Goshen, Indiana, the daughter of Harrison and Laura Greer Keyes. She graduated from Peru High School in Indiana and worked for about four years as a bookkeeper in a bank. She was a lifelong member of The Brethren Church, baptized into Brethren Church membership in 1914 and a member of Ashland Park Street Brethren Church from 1946 until her death. She received a diploma in music from Ashland College and later studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

She was married to Delbert Flora in 1929. They served Brethren churches in Cerro Gordo, Ill., Masontown, Pa., and Elkhart, Ind., before her husband joined the seminary faculty in 1946.

Mrs. Flora taught piano in the Ashland College music department from 1947-49. She continued to give private piano lessons for 30 years, teaching a total of nearly 200 students. During her husband's years at the seminary, she was active in the seminary wives association, giving wise counsel to many future pastors' wives. She also traveled with her husband to Europe and the Middle East five times to study the historical origins of Christianity.

She was a longtime member of the Women's Missionary Society and served as the W.M.S. representative

to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church from 1950-63 and as treasurer of that board from 1951-61.

She is survived by three sons and daughters-in-law, Jerry (a professor at Ashland Theological Seminary) and Julia Flora of Ashland; Guy and Patricia Flora of Cardington, Ohio; and John and Donna Flora of Urbana, Ohio; and by 10 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Her funeral service was held at Van Hove Funeral Home in Ashland with Park Street pastor Dr. Arden Gilmer officiating, assisted by Dr. M. Virgil Ingraham.

The family suggests that memorial contributions may be made to Ashland Theological Seminary, Park Street Brethren Church, or a charity of the donor's choice.

The crime in human cloning is that it transforms procreation into production where human children are the products.

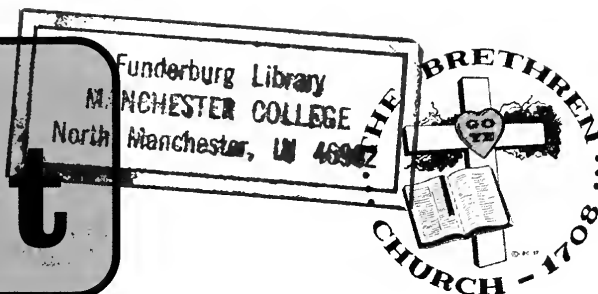
— Gary Bauer, president,
Family Research Council

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The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 120, No. 3

A newsletter for Brethren people

March 1998

How Can We Experience Renewal?

By Reilly R. Smith

THE THEME for The Brethren Church in 1998 is renewal. I have prepared an acrostic for renewal in missions (see box at right) based on the letters r-e-n-e-w-a-l and the vision path set by the Executive Board of The Brethren Church. In the following article I will elaborate on that acrostic.

It starts with love

First of all, we Brethren need to Rediscover that our purpose for living is found in the Great Commandments. That purpose is to love God, to love our neighbors, and to love one another (see Matt 22:34-40 and Jn. 13:31-35).

The first Great Commandment is to love God completely—with everything we are and have—all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We desperately need God. And He desperately wants our hearts. When He has them, renewal is under way.

The second Great Commandment is to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Our Lord Jesus Christ made an interesting application of this commandment in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). A religious person wanted to justify his attitudes and actions toward others. Jesus pulled the man's smug rug out from under him. Our neighbors are everyone we meet. We must minister to all people because God loves them all.

The third Great Commandment

Renewal in Missions

Rediscover our purpose
Embrace our responsibility
Nurture spiritual vitality
Evangelize, establish, equip,
and encourage
Work to include and equip
youth
Activate new systems of
educational support
Lift to new heights

also calls for total commitment. We must love one another with the measure of love Christ shows us. He gave His life for us. We must live for one another (see Phil. 2:1-5). God tells us to look out for one another and to develop the attitude of our Lord Jesus toward His people.

Love is the core of Christian living. Love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Rediscovering love—for God, for our neighbors, and for one another—is the beginning of renewal.

Second, we must Embrace the Great Commission to make disciples for Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20). This is our work for the Lord. He really only gives us four commandments in the New Testament. The

first three are outlined above. The fourth is to evangelize people, establish them in the faith, equip them to live and work in the world, and

encourage them in service. Another way to say this is that we must help people meet Jesus Christ, know Jesus Christ, love Jesus Christ, and follow Jesus Christ.

The heart of missions

Making disciples is the heart of missions. It starts at home and extends around the world (Acts 1:8). Everyone who has not put his or her faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is a potential disciple. Our Lord Jesus told us to go everywhere in the world and tell the Good News to everyone (Mk. 16:15). Embracing our responsibility to make disciples is the beginning of renewal in missions.

We also need to Nurture spiritual vitality among growing Christians (2 Tim. 3:14-4:5). We must recover the vitality of the early church. In 1995 our General Conference theme was "The Devoted Church . . . Grows," taken from Acts 2:42-47. Verse 42 contains the secret for renewing spiritual vitality among us. The early Christians devoted themselves (with heart, soul, mind, and strength) to four things: the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. The early Christians lived out these principles in

(continued on next page)



Rev. Reilly Smith

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balance. They not only heard the word, they did it (cf. James 1:22-25). They gave themselves to one another selflessly (vv. 44-45). They shared their lives together in the church and in the community (vv. 46-47). When they prayed, they shook the earth (Acts 4:23-31). And God added to their number daily (v. 47).

Devotion to the living Lord

Our devotions must become devotion to the living Lord Jesus. We must love and obey His word. Studying it is only a small part. We must love to communicate with Him about everything so that we can grow in our relationship with Him. Then He can direct and empower our efforts. We must love the church, the body of Christ, enough to make it our priority. We must also love one another enough to spend time together outside of the church. Nurturing spiritual vitality will renew growing Christians and build growing churches.

We must also **Evangelize, Establish, Equip, and Encourage** all kinds of people wherever they live. Executive Director Buzz Sandberg sees "a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multinational Brethren Church." Our Lord Jesus saw the same thing (cf. Acts 1:8). God's purpose from the beginning was to bless people of every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev. 5:9, 7:9, and 14:6-7). He doesn't want anyone to be lost (2 Pet. 3:9).

God renews us in missions when we deliberately reach out to all people, whether they live across town, across the continent, or across the ocean. God renews us in missions when we reach out to and welcome people who are not like us as well as those who are. He loves all people.

Our love for and work among many different people groups will be a sign that He is renewing us.

Another thing we must do is **Work** to include and equip our youth as servant leaders. In one sense, this is simply an extension of the last paragraph. Our children are people too. They must become growing disciples when they accept Christ, not just when they become adults. We need their spiritual gifts to operate in the body of Christ now (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

Paul reminded Timothy that he should not allow others to despise his youthfulness (1 Tim. 4:11-14). Young people possess energy, idealism, dedication, talent, and spiritual gifts. We injure the body of Christ when we fail to use them. They can do God's work effectively. Working to include and equip our youth guarantees that God will continue renewing us in missions.

We must also **Activate** new systems of educational support for pastors and church leaders (Eph. 4:11-16). We need to invest heavily in our pastors and teachers. The body of Christ will not function well if those who lead us are not functioning well. Our pastors and leaders need to be continually inspired, refreshed, equipped, and growing, both for their own sakes and to prepare us for ministry.

Developing ministering saints who reach out to a growing number of different kinds of people requires new skills and special inspiration. Activating new systems of educational support for our pastors and leaders will enable them to develop new human resources for renewal in missions.

A kingdom of priests

And finally, we need to **Lift** men and women to new heights of ministry and leadership (1 Pet. 2:9). We are God's people. He called us to be a kingdom of priests serving our world. Each of us received special gifts and abilities when we were born again. Each of us will give an account before the judgment seat of Christ for the ministry we performed (2 Cor. 5:6-10).

We also enjoy God's constant presence and empowerment (Matt. 28:20; John 1:12, 7:37-39; and Acts

1:4-8). God's people are God's plan. He intended that the whole nation of Israel should spread His glory throughout the nations. The priests and prophets were to prepare the nation to do so.

Today He intends the whole church to spread His gospel and His glory over all the earth. His pastors and leaders must prepare the people to do so. But now, as then, God's work belongs to God's people—all of us working together, filled with His Spirit, being renewed by Him daily. Lifting men and women to new heights of ministry and leadership will mean that God is renewing the whole church for missions.

The gospel is not difficult

The gospel is not difficult. It is not a complicated philosophical concept. It doesn't come from a faraway place. People who confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of their lives and who believe that God raised Him from the dead will be saved. But in order to believe, they have to hear. And in order for them to hear, someone will have to preach to them. All will have to testify. Some will have to go. Some will have to send. Everyone needs to hear (Rom. 10:5-18).

Renewal in Brethren Missions will happen when we love God enough to do His will. It will happen when we love our neighbors enough to make sure they have an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel. And it will happen when we love one another enough to stop playing church and start being the church—making disciples of Jesus Christ in our homes, in our communities, throughout our regions, across our nation, and around the world.

We will know God is renewing us when He calls many Brethren men and women to plant churches in the United States and in other lands. We will know that God is renewing us when we have enough funds to expand our current ministries and to finance new ministries. We will know that God is renewing us when the Great Commandments and the Great Commission are the central issues in The Brethren Church. [†]

Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.

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When Jesus Comes to Town

(What is *our* reaction?)

By Brian H. Moore

WHEN JESUS rode into Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday, His arrival caused quite a few reactions.

First, of course, was the celebration of joy and anticipation by His supporters. They shouted "**Hosanna!**" (meaning "Save now") and threw branches and cloaks along the way. A very fitting arrival for a King!

This action set off a reaction by the guardians of the status quo, who said (in my words), "*Teacher, tell your fanatical followers to pipe down!*" Their reaction was one of a combination of jealousy and fear. They were jealous because He was getting the attention they thought they deserved, and they were fearful because it looked too much like an uprising. The status quo would be changed

and they would lose what little control they thought they had.

Then there was the reaction of the uninformed multitude, who, seeing all this commotion, asked, "Who is this?" For whatever reason or combination of reasons, these were the people who had had the same advantages as the others who lived in that area, but who, somehow, had never bothered to take notice or to stay informed. Granted, some of the out-of-town folks who were there that day couldn't have known, but even among the local people there was widespread ignorance of just who this Rabbi from Nazareth was. Theirs was a reaction of curiosity, not of genuine inquiry. But at least He got

their attention for a few moments.

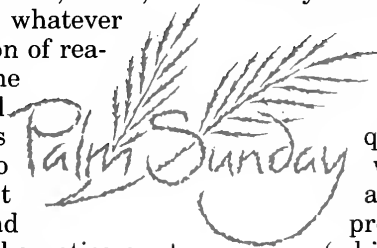
His reaction? When He drew near the city, He began to weep! Joy in the crowd—sorrow in the Christ! He saw all the variant reactions, but He also saw through all of them. What He didn't see was repentance and faith. What He didn't see was a willingness to be embraced by the love of God.

Jesus still comes to towns and countrysides, and He still gets

an assortment of reactions:

Some get all excited (without quite knowing why). Some get angry and feel pressure to change (which they are unwilling to do). Some keep their distance or, at best, ask curious questions. And Jesus still weeps for the lost. [†]

Dr. Moore is pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church. This article first appeared in the St. James Church newsletter.



Habits of Highly Ineffective Christians:

Treat God Like a Pal

By Chris Fabry

*Some of us are already pretty ineffective Christians, although we could probably be even less effective if we really tried. Chris Fabry tells us how. Of course, if your desire is to be a **better** Christian, you should probably try doing just the opposite of what Fabry suggests.*

Fabry's suggestions are taken from his book, The 77 Habits of Highly Ineffective Christians (© 1997 by Christopher H. Fabry), and are reprinted here by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

ALMIGHTY. OMNIPOTENT. The Great I Am. Awesome Lord. These are terms you must not

use or think about if you are to maximize your ineffectivity. Do not exalt God as Lord over all in your life. Instead you must bring him down to your own level. You must think of God as your heavenly pal.

The Good Lord. The man upstairs. My Big Buddy. Mr. Jesus.

You must take the gospel song "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" to the extreme. When you are tempted to sin, do not picture God sitting on his throne, surrounded by worshiping angels and beings too wonderful to describe. Do not picture him in his blinding righteousness, or yourself filled with awe

as you shrink from his presence.

Picture him in a cardigan and jeans, putting his arm around you and saying, "Hey, that's okay, bud. Don't sweat the little sins, I'll take care of it." By doing this you will treat the sacrifice he made on the cross as something one business partner would do for another.

Think of God as a loving, doting grandfather, complete with rocking chair and beard. Pray casually, and without reverence, beginning your prayers with something like "Hi God, it's me."

If you focus your mind on making the Almighty, Omnipotent Master of the Universe seem like any other person, you will be well on your way to a wonderfully ineffective life.

Introspection Corner: How have you treated the Big Guy like a pal this week? [†]

Ready or Not

By Elizabeth Cody Newenhuyse

Sometimes we think that we cannot witness to others or share our faith until we "get our own house in order." The following article, though not specifically about evangelism, speaks to this way of thinking.

I USED TO THINK that before I reached out to others, I had to be complete within myself, all problems solved, and wearing a size six to boot.

It's a little like our house. For a long time I didn't want to entertain visitors because our house isn't Martha Stewart perfect. Our dining room chairs don't match, for instance. Oh, we started out our married life with matching seating, but then the upholstery got kind of grungy and the crosspieces or whatever you call them fell out and . . . oh, never mind. So over time we've acquired various chairs.

Some of our friends from church have huge, baronial dining rooms with something like twelve matching chairs, and when you eat there you expect some minion to triumphantly bring in a boar's head on a platter. Our dining room is all right, but it isn't baronial.

And then our house is also small. It has peeling patches on the kitchen ceiling and various other flaws that in my mind have grown into hideous eyesores that no one can possibly miss. But I like to cook and I like people, and Amanda's an only child, so somewhere along the line I decided that my qualms were ridiculous and if I waited until my house was perfect before extending hospitality, our friends would all require special bland diets and a wheelchair ramp up to the front door. We still have to bring in a motley assortment of chairs to accommodate everyone in the dining room, and I still have to pull the shower curtain to hide the hard-water stain in the tub, but so what? We have fun, and nobody goes away hungry.

In the same way, when I began speaking, I developed a message about friendship and loneliness. At first I thought, *Why would people want to hear from someone who's struggled so much with this issue?* But as I told stories about my struggles, the audience would laugh, because they'd been there. I think it made more of an impact than if I had presented myself as one smooth and unbroken by life—as Billy Graham says, as if I had been "set apart, untouched, like a piece of fine china in a locked cabinet."

What could be more moving than listening to Christopher Reeve speak between breaths from his ventilator? What if he—or Joni Eareckson Tada—had waited until they could walk before beginning

their work on behalf of the disabled? What if Dave Dravecky only boasted about his pitching exploits and never mentioned his cancer? Or remember Dave Roever, who was injured in Vietnam? In an interview, he told the host that the last time he had appeared on the program, several years before, he was still contemplating suicide, still in the midst of the emotional fire while he was speaking of God to others.

How costly! How Christlike!

What if Paul never spoke of his sins or boasted of his weakness? What if the Gospels never spoke of Peter's denial of Christ?

We struggle. Christ touches us through our pain. We then, out of the overflow of our gratitude, go on to touch others. We give as much out of our redemption from pain as we give out of the pain itself. [†]

*Excerpted from the book **Cooked to Perfection** by Elizabeth Cody Newenhuyse (Zondervan Publishing House, 1997). Article provided by the publisher.*

Table "Talkers" needed

Preparations are well underway for General Conference, and some exciting things are planned! More about that in next month's EVANGELIST.

But in the meantime, the Congregational Ministries Council is happy to announce that it will again sponsor Table Talks, which have been so popular at the past two Conferences.

A council task force is now in the process of lining up topics and presenters for these Table Talks. Presentations are to focus on ministry ideas *that work*, with the emphasis this year particular on ministries that

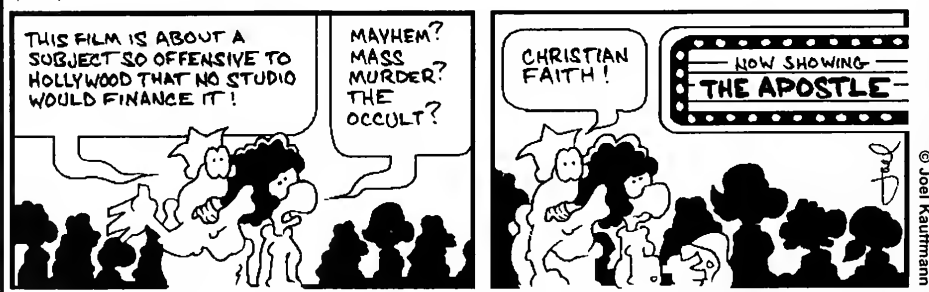
relate to personal and church renewal. Table Talks may be led by anyone—pastor, lay person, or both.

If you have a topic on which you would be willing to lead a Table Talk discussion, or if you have a suggestion of someone else who ought to be a presenter, please contact Cindy Smith and give her this information. You may write to her c/o the Brethren Church National Office (524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805), or e-mail her at reillyrs@bright.net.

The task force needs to hear from you by May 1 at the latest. Thanks for making this work so well!

— Tina Ross

Pontius' Puddle



The Old Testament God of Love

By Norman Styers

MANY PEOPLE, even many Christians, have picked up the idea that the God of the Old Testament is a disagreeable, mean-spirited God who enjoys catching people in a lapse so He can punish them. He especially enjoys ordering His people to commit genocide against the ungodly. But then Jesus came and somehow deflected the wrath of this vengeful God.

The truth is, God has always been a God of love. There is not one God in the Old Testament and another, "nicer" God in the New Testament. The Old Testament is already a "covenant of love" (Neh. 1: 5), and God has always wanted His people to be a people of love and compassion.

The greatest commandment

When Jesus was challenged to pick which commandment was the greatest, He chose a passage that would have been familiar to all the Jews—a passage from the Old Testament. Even today, in every synagogue service, the Jews recite Deuteronomy 6:4, a verse called (from its first word in Hebrew) the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." The most

important commandment in the Bible is the verse that follows: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

The second greatest commandment, which Jesus said was like the first, is also from the Old Testament—from Leviticus 19:18: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The Psalms are full of expressions of love for God: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God" (Ps. 42:1). But more important than the love we feel for God is the love that God shows to us, for "We love, because he first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19).

God's love for Israel

All of God's dealings with Israel in the Old Testament display His love for them. God chose Israel because of His love for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength . . ." (Deut. 4:37). And His love was not based on any special quality or goodness that the children of Israel possessed. "The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Deut. 7:7-8).

God's love for the undeserving

Two entire books of the Old Testament are devoted to the theme of God's love for the undeserving. The prophet Hosea had a wife who was unfaithful to him, but God told him, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the

Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods . . ." (Hos. 3:1).

God compares Himself to a husband who feels deep pain when his wife has been unfaithful to him, and yet God shows us through Hosea that He continues to love us in spite of our response to Him. Hosea 11:4 describes God's care for us: "I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them."

God's love for the Gentiles

God's love extends not only to Israel but also to the Gentile nations. God told the prophet Jonah to go and warn Nineveh, capital of the cruel Assyrian Empire, that it would be destroyed in forty days because of its great wickedness. We often pay so much attention to the early part of the book, in which Jonah rebels and tries, without success, to run away from God, that we ignore the latter part of the book.

When the people of Nineveh repented, God spared them. Indeed, Jonah complained that he had known all along that this would happen. "That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity" (Jon. 4:2). God's question to Jonah that ends the book—"Should I not be concerned about that great city?"—expresses His compassion not only for the people of Nineveh, but for the animals as well.

God set the same standard for Israel. They were to love not only God and their neighbor, but "outsiders" also: "And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt" (Deut. 10:19).

It is true that God, in His desire to protect Israel, takes some measures that strike modern sensibilities as stern and harsh. But that does not negate the fact that it is the God of the Old Testament—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—who is the Father who sent Jesus into the world for our salvation. [✠]

Rev. Styers is a free-lance writer and former pastor who lives in Bethany, Oklahoma.

Gratefulness

Jesus healed ten lepers

And sent them on their way:
But only one of them came back
To thank the Lord that day.

How often we unthinking go
Along our own sweet way;
When all the while we overlook
How God has blessed our day.

A little prayer with words of
thanks

And praise to Him convey;
Let's slow our rush, retrace our
steps
And thank our Lord today.

— H. L. Wood

Brethren Mission in India: A Bright Spot in a Dark Place

By Reilly and Cindy Smith

INDIA IS A LAND of contrasts. It is elegant, but littered with trash. It is beautiful, but also ugly. India has many wealthy neighborhoods, but also many slums. It smells of fragrant flowers and of open sewers.

Many Indian people speak three or four languages, but many cannot read or write. Indian villages have television antennas on grass huts. Many Indian people have never seen a white man or woman in person, but they watch mostly western television and movies at home, despite the fact that India has the second largest movie industry in the world—second only to Hollywood.

India is also a land of extremes. Indian drivers, for example, take road rage to new heights. They drive every way you can imagine—on the wrong side of the road, with bright lights only or sometimes with no lights at all, unless they are passing. Whatever vehicle is the largest or most persistent wins. The horn is the most important piece of auto equipment and is used more than the clutch. To make matters worse, the roads are used by everyone and everything—dogs, pigs, cows, goats, water buffalo, rickshaws, three-wheel taxis, bicycles, buses, trucks, motorcycles, cars, and people.

Gods that offer no hope

The Indian people also take religion to new heights (or new lows). In Rajahmundry, six million idols clutter the hearts, minds, souls, and eyes of the people. Among these millions of Hindu gods, not one offers any hope. But the people worship them feverishly anyway. Their zeal has resulted in actual battles between Hindu and Islamic extremists in the northern part of the country.

Human language fails to adequately describe India. She is too complex, too overcrowded, too contradictory to be described. There are

too many sights, sounds, and smells and too much activity. We are at a loss! Words fail us. Pictures, slides,



even videos fail to convey what we would like to say. We never wanted to leave, but we'll be glad to be home. We love the Indian people. Their needs are tremendous, but so are the opportunities to spread the gospel among them.

Brethren Mission is a very bright spot in a very dark place. The headquarters is in Rajahmundry. Other centers are located in Hyderabad, an Islamic stronghold, and in Visakhapatnam, a seaport and important Hindu center. A new center was recently opened in Vijayawada, home to the busiest train station in India.

God's Spirit is moving in southern India. Many people are coming to Christ daily, just as they did in the book of Acts (see Acts 2:47.) Brethren Mission

plays a very significant role in the advancement of God's kingdom in Andhra Pradesh, a state located in southeastern India (see map).

Brethren Mission in Rajahmundry maintains a city church and dozens of village churches. It is our largest ministry center. The Rajahmundry church operates two orphanages, one for boys and one for girls. The children receive food, clothing, shelter, education, and (most important) salvation. Many former orphans have become pastors, teachers, and Brethren Mission workers.

The Bible Institute

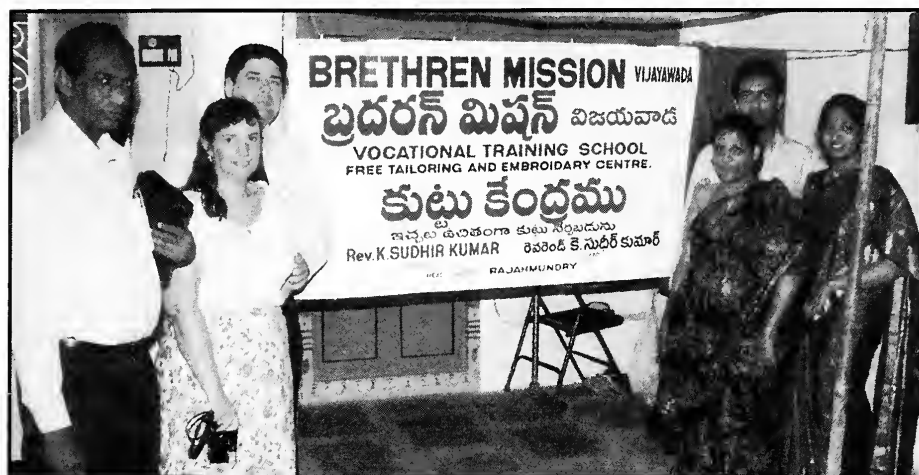
The Bible Institute also operates out of the Rajahmundry church. Currently, the Bible Institute runs a Theological Education by Extension course, training 20 or 25 students annually. These students start 20 new village churches every year.

A special gift has provided the funds to open a residential school on the third floor of the boys' orphanage. This school will house 20 more students selected from among the brightest and best of our pastors. Before this school can be used, \$5,000 is needed for furnishings and books, and the students will need sponsors for fifty dollars per month.

The Rajahmundry church also runs sewing and typing schools, which provide poor people with the skills they need to pass government certification exams. People with



Recent additions to the Brethren Mission team in India are K. Sudhir Kumar, son of Brethren missionaries Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar, and his wife Latha. The two were married January 10, 1998, and on February 1, 1998, Sudhir was ordained and Latha was consecrated for Gospel ministry. Reilly and Cindy Smith participated in the ordination service.



During their visit to India, Cindy and Reilly Smith joined Prasanth (l.), Nirmala (3rd from r.), Sudhir, and Latha in opening and dedicating a new Brethren Mission center in Vijayawada, where Sudhir and Latha will serve.

government certificates are able to get work that enables them to support themselves and their families well. The Rajahmundry church, in cooperation with World Relief, also provides the community with safe drinking water and free medical treatment. The medical clinic is also taken to the villages in the Brethren Mission van. This van is now in dire need of replacement, because it has been used so much.

The center at Visakhapatnam also has a city church and dozens of village churches. Attendance at the Visakhapatnam church is approximately 250 on Sunday morning, about half the attendance at Rajahmundry. The Visak church also operates sewing and typing schools.

The Hyderabad center contains a city church and sewing and typing schools. The church is smaller but growing.

A new mission center

We helped to inaugurate and dedicate a new center in Vijayawada. It will start with a sewing school. Later, Brethren Mission will plant a church. This is the way all of the centers start. We call this servant evangelism in the United States. Brethren Mission in India has been operating this way for nearly 30 years. Rev. K. Sudhir Kumar will supervise this new center. He will teach Bible in the sewing school and plant the first church.

Historically, more than 80 percent of the women who graduate from the sewing schools accept Christ

during their studies. Since each of the four schools trains 30 students per year, nearly 100 women will receive both a government sewing certificate and salvation in Jesus Christ in 1998. Another 15 or 20 will likely receive Christ later. Many husbands and children also accept Christ as Savior and Lord because of the sewing schools.

One of our trip's highlights was meeting Mrs. K. Sudhir Kumar—Latha—a beautiful, intelligent, gifted young woman with a winsome smile. She is already a solid addition to the Kumar family ministry team. She, like her mother-in-law Nirmala, has the gift of hospitality. She also works very well with Sudhir and her in-laws. She has a master's degree in English, so talking with her was no problem. In fact, she and Sudhir speak English at home, since they speak different regional languages.

Reilly participated in the ordination service for K. Sudhir Kumar, preaching the ordination message and pronouncing the official words of ordination. Sudhir is now the Rev. K. Sudhir Kumar. The ceremony was wonderful!

Both Sudhir and Reilly wept when Reilly pre-

sented Sudhir a silver Communion tray that had been given to Sudhir's great-grandfather in 1938. Great-grandfather had then passed it to Sudhir's grandfather in 1940, who passed it to Prasanth in 1969. The Communion plate represents four generations of Christian ministers in Dr. K. Prasanth Kumar's family. It was a very touching moment.

Cindy had the honor, with Nirmala, of praying the dedication prayers for Latha during the ordination service. Cindy and Latha grew close during our time in India.

A comprehensive visit

We are very thankful to have taken this trip. During our time in India we spoke in all four Brethren Mission centers, at the three city churches, and in many villages. One of the villages was so remote that some of the Hindu people there asked if we were going to present a drama, since two of us had painted ourselves white.

We also visited the orphanages, all the sewing and typing schools, the medical clinic, the mobile medical clinic in a remote village, and the Brethren Reading Room in Rajahmundry. We felt honored and humbled every place we went. We were greeted graciously and listened to attentively. Brethren Mission in India does much for many people, and they are very appreciative. We are rightly proud of our mission work in India. [†]

Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church. Rev. and Mrs. Smith visited India from January 22 to February 12, 1998.



Another highlight of the Smiths' visit to India was participating in the dedication of a new church building in the village of Patthikayavalasa. Funds for construction of the building were provided by Rev. Robert and Alberta Holsinger of Ashland, Ohio.

A Vision for Theological Education in South America

By Harley Gerber

IN OCTOBER 1997, I had the privilege of traveling to Argentina with Dr. Buzz Sandberg and Dr. Fred Finks to participate in the organizational meeting for a new Brethren biblical institute. I have just returned from a second visit to continue that work.

The South American Theological Seminary (S.T.S.) is the vision of the Argentine Brethren to meet the growing need for training of Christian leadership throughout Argentina and other parts of South America. At its formative meeting in October, I was asked to serve on the Board of Trustees of the new S.T.S. As a businessman, I felt I could offer some assistance to provide underlying support for the new school.

My primary intent at this meeting was to gain a better understanding of how things are done in Argentina and to seek avenues to provide funding for its future. I was at a distinct disadvantage and felt totally unqualified because of my inability to speak Spanish or to understand the culture. But God is very capable of filling the gaps of both communication and understanding.

These beginning board meetings are fundamental to the success of the school. A lot of time and many long hours of discussion were needed to unify all of us in what is needed, what is expected, and what would actually be. In the end, it all came together, and we were of the same mind and heart.

I was able to meet with some Brethren leaders in Argentina about plans to provide business support that would help provide scholarships for students. I will continue to offer whatever advice and assistance I can to assist their efforts.

We have returned to the United States believing there is a real need for the establishment of the South American Theological Seminary. Mariela and Eduardo Rodriguez are totally committed and qualified to lead the school. The development of a balanced budget within three years

will be an enormous task, since about 80 percent of the students will need scholarship help. The school will officially open on March 15 with a correspondence program. Approximately 80 students are currently registered.

While it is easy to be overwhelmed with a project of this nature and scope, we are at the same time believing that with God's help, South American Theological Seminary will become a great institution of learning of the same nature as Ashland Theological Seminary.

The Brethren in Argentina are very thankful for everything the Brethren are doing or have done. They are gracious people with a great love for God. Colón, Argentina now has a special

place in my heart, and I expect to return pronto.

As a Mennonite brother, I consider it a privilege to be involved with Ashland Theological Seminary and now also with South American Theological Seminary. [✠]

Mr. Gerber lives in Dalton, Ohio, where he and his son and son-in-law operate a livestock feed business. He and his wife were major donors to the new Gerber Academic Center at Ashland Theological Seminary.



A special blessing for Mr. Gerber during his visit to Argentina was the opportunity to visit one of the neighborhood food centers of the Colón Brethren Church, where lunch is served to children in need.

Transitions

Two members of the Brethren World Missions family are making some changes.

Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda resigned as consultant to Brethren Missionary



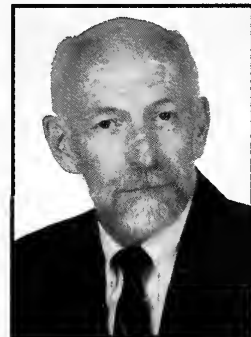
Ministries effective December 31, 1997. Dr. Miranda served the Missionary Board in various positions and capacities for 26 years. His decision to resign is based on his increased responsibilities as Director of Church Planting and Director of the Doctor of Ministries program at Columbia International University. Dr. Miranda still plans to assist Brethren Missions in any way he can. He also continues to serve as President of the Board of Directors of Hispanic

Education Association, "Para Ti Mujer" radio program.

Education Association, "Para Ti Mujer" radio program.

Allen Baer, who has served as a missionary in Argentina for the past 15 years, plans to resign in June, at the end of his present term of service. Allen has served faithfully in Argentina as a

"utility" missionary. His responsibilities have included teaching, leading services, playing piano, preaching occasionally, translating documents, bookkeeping, helping with



administration, and doing anything and everything else that needed to be done. Upon his return to the United States and following deputation, he will live in Arizona.

Juan Carlos and Allen will both be attending General Conference this summer in Ashland. [✠]

A View From the Pew

By Tom Ehrich

TWENTY-EIGHT MONTHS after moving from pulpit to pew, I have come to three conclusions about church, two of them probably heretical.

First: The view from the pew is different, and views within the pews are even more in conflict.

Second: Our facilities are both blessing and curse, but mostly curse.

Third: A rigid orthodoxy is crippling the Christian movement.

I want to address the first of those conclusions.

Pastors and lay people would get along better if they accepted how differently they see the Christian enterprise. Pastors are proprietors of an institution, but lay people don't necessarily see themselves as members of an institution. A few do, just as an energetic few become highly invested in PTA or soccer league.

Most laity, however, come seeking something of God. Institution—and its annoyances—are a price to be paid, not a primary purpose.

A search for meaning

Pastors feel a call to convert, prod, and instruct. Laity don't necessarily feel a need to be converted, prodded, or instructed. Sitting in the pews on Sunday are an amazing collection of needs: broken marriages, lost jobs, financial stress, troubled children, failing health, loneliness. Some want soothing, but even more, folks

in the pews want meaning: are these trials leading to life or to death? Where is God?

The greater tension in congregations, however, is between the energetic few and the many whose life-focus is elsewhere.

The energetic few

Any volunteer organization depends on an energetic few. If they are running the candy sale or recruiting coaches, they deserve special benefits, like a relationship with the principal or a moment on stage.

We treat church as another volunteer organization. Pastors spend inordinate amounts of time tending to the energetic few. The few, in turn, develop a proprietary attitude toward church, seeing it as theirs to enjoy, protect, and control. They wish that many others shared their enthusiasm for institutional life. "What can we do to get more people involved?" they ask.

But church is different. Church exists for the stranger, for the wounded, to proclaim Good News to the poor, to welcome outcasts, and to incarnate the non-hierarchical love of God (cf. Lk. 4:18). Being present is the height of being "involved." Drinking at the well and then going out to live and to serve is reason enough for the faithful to gather.

Instead of focusing on the energetic few and their needs for control

and applause, the church's energy ought to be outward, toward the many and, beyond them, the world.

I think of the cookie monitor who stood beside a serving line to enforce the one-cookie-per-person rule. From an institutional-management perspective, her hovering made sense. But it communicated two messages: Grace is in short supply, and the institution needs to be protected against me.

God's kingdom isn't a closed economy, however. Our model is the feeding of the 5,000, where the Twelve distributed food whose existence, availability, and abundance weren't theirs to control. The cookie monitor's role, if she wanted to have one, was to find more cookies, not to protect an artificially limited supply.

As a pastor, I recruited and rewarded cookie monitors. Now that I sit in a pew, hungry for God's food, I find cookie monitors an annoyance, not just because I wanted two cookies and she stood in my way, but because my approach to God is already tentative, shaped as it is by my sins, my needs, and the confusion that getting anywhere close to God inevitably inspires. I don't need one more barrier. I need arms so improbably and irresponsibly open that I know this place is of God, not of the world.

A protective attitude

Cookies are a small item, of course. But I observed her proprietary attitude, her defend-the-gates posture, her focus on the cookie plate and not on people seeking food, her distrust of children and the uninitiated, and her enjoyment at having this measure of control, and I saw the entire enterprise more clearly.

With our rules about who can receive Communion, the creeds we demand people to sign before joining, and the club atmosphere we create with our focus on the inner circle, churches protect their integrity against the motley herd. But the job Jesus gave us was to pass out food to anyone who is hungry. [†]

Tom Ehrich, an episcopal priest living in Winston-Salem, N.C., is an author and former Wall Street Journal reporter.

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Appreciation

"It is virtually impossible to overstate the positive impact of regularly expressing appreciation to one another in the family unit. Time and again, studies of strong families reveal that *affirming* one another is a basic cohesive factor in every truly happy family."

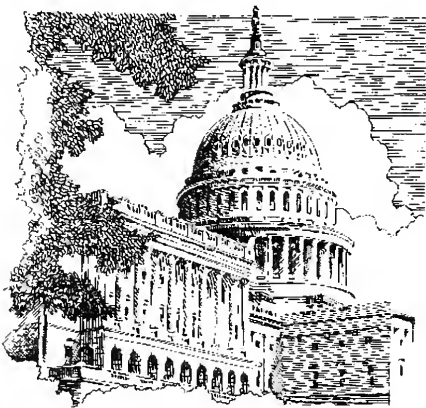
* * * * *

"True appreciation in the family looks beyond each member's faults and mistakes to celebrate all that is

unique and special about that person The focus is on the positive. As Matthew Fox observes, 'Healthy families remind each other of their goodness; unhealthy families remind each other of their failings.'"

From *30 Days to a Smart Family Booklet: "Building Bridges"* by Paul Lewis and Thom Black (Zonder-van, 1997).

Editor's note: *If these things are true of the family, are they not also true of the church family?*



Hallowed Ground: Washington's Monuments to Faith, Family, and Freedom

By Charles Donovan and Christina Darnell

JUDGES AND LEGISLATORS who exhibit confusion about the constitutionality of acknowledgments of God in (and on) public buildings should get out of their stuffy chambers and go visit some of our national treasures. Just one day spent traversing the Mall in Washington, D.C., would expose them to an undeniable fact of American history. Biblical and religious quotations, including the Ten Commandments, adorn nearly every significant building and monument in our nation's capital, inscribed and enshrined there as the natural public conversation of America's leaders in every generation.

Indeed, the role of faith, family, and freedom in American history is inscribed on monuments across the length and breadth of Washington, D.C. For instance, the words of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, carved in granite, thunder from inside the Memorial that bears his name, praying that the "*mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away*" but recalling that "*the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*"

From the Lincoln Memorial, a perfect line of sight connects you with the magnificent obelisk of the Washington Monument. The form of the Monument recalls ancient Rome and Greece, but at its topmost point, inscribed on the aluminum tip of the capstone, is the Latin phrase *Laus Deo* — "Praise be to God." Along the stairway to that height are 190 carved tributes donated by states, cities, individuals, associations, and foreign governments. The blocks resound with quotations from Scripture — "*Holiness to the Lord*" (Exodus 28), "*Search the Scriptures*" (John 5:39),

"The memory of the just is blessed" (Proverbs 10:7) — and such invocations as, "*May Heaven to this Union continue its Benefice.*"

Farther east, along the Mall's north side, stands the National Archives. No building in Washington, save perhaps the Library of Congress, is more emblematic of this nation's desire to preserve its history as the key to a secure future. Carved in stone adjacent to the entrance of the Archives are the words "*What is past is prologue,*" appropriately introducing the original parchment of the United States Constitution inside. Inlaid at the Archives' entrance is a bronze medallion of the Ten Commandments, surrounded by four winged figures representing Legislation, Justice, History, and War and Defense, a testament to the Archives' architects' bold witness to the centrality of biblical truth to the American experience.

The U. S. Capitol also bears public witness to the legacy of biblically inspired faith that Americans have passed on from generation to generation. New England statesman and orator Daniel Webster was voted by the United States Senate in the 1980s as one of the five greatest senators ever to serve in that chamber. In 1851, when the new House and Senate wings of the Capitol were begun, Webster gave a speech that was deposited in the cornerstone. Its final words are these:

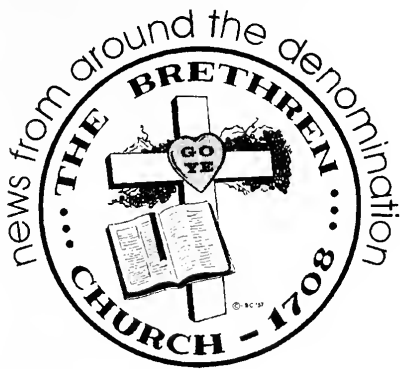
If therefore, it shall hereafter be the will of God that this structure should fall from the base, that its foundations be upturned and this deposit brought to the eyes of men, be it then known, that on this day the Union of the United States of America stands firm, that their constitution still exists unimpaired, and with all of its original usefulness and glory, growing every day stronger and stronger in the affection of the great body of the American

people, and attracting more and more the admiration of the world. And all here assembled, whether belonging to public life or to private life, with hearts devotedly thankful to Almighty God for the preservation of the liberty and happiness of the country, unite in sincere and fervent prayers that this deposit, and the walls and arches, the domes and towers, the columns and the entablatures, now to be erected over it, may endure forever.

From the plaza of the Capitol look west across the Mall to the hillsides of Arlington Cemetery, where lie the remains of generations who kept the pledges of life, fortune, and sacred honor to keep our nation free. Each hour the guard is changed at the tomb where rests "*in honored glory an American soldier known but to God.*"

From cornerstones to capstones, from cornices to colonnades, from the halls of Congress to the hallowed hillsides of Arlington Cemetery, a mighty causeway of faith courses through the landscape of the nation's capital. To eliminate that causeway would require more than the intellectual dishonesty of judges and legislators; it would require the wielding of chisels and jackhammers against marble and granite. The dramas playing themselves out in Alabama and other communities across the nation do not yet feature such tools of historical revisionism, but their implication is the same: To blot out the acknowledgment of God in our public life is to change the meaning of America. [†]

Charles A. Donovan is Vice President for Program Planning at the Family Research Council. Christina Darnell was a Witherspoon Fellow at the Family Research Council during the summer of 1997. This article is adapted from "Washington's Monuments to Family, Faith and Freedom" by the same authors, which originally appeared in the October 3, 1997, Washington Times.



W.M.S. at Mulvane making "ugly quilts" for homeless

Mulvane, Kans. — The Women's Missionary Society of the Mulvane Brethren Church has a mission in its community—making "ugly quilt" sleeping bags for the homeless.

The women are using an idea that started several years ago with Jim and Flo Wheatley, who felt a need to help others. The group began making "Brothers' Keeper" quilts, and in 1994 gave away 5,300 of these.

The women have involved the rest of the church family by asking for donations of old blankets, mattress pads, and bed spreads to use in the quilts. They also seek donations of towels, wash cloths, stocking hats, and gloves to put with the sleeping bags when they are presented.

As the women make the sleeping bags, they pray that God will bless those who receive them to know that they are loved.

Anyone desiring more information about making "ugly quilt" sleeping bags may contact Thelma Adams, president of the Mulvane Church's W.M.S.

— reported by Sara Hanna



Working on "ugly quilt" sleeping bags are (l. to r.) Thelma Adams, Dorothy Mills, and JoAnn Belcher.

María Miranda speaks at women's conference in Lima, Peru, to prepare for Graham crusade

Columbia, S.C. — Brethren Radio Missionary María Miranda was in Lima, Peru, February 12 and 13 speaking to the largest Christian event for women ever held in that city.

Mrs. Miranda spoke at a two-day women's conference that was held in preparation for a March 4-7 evangelistic crusade in Lima, at which Dr. Franklin Graham was the speaker. Mrs. Miranda was invited to speak at the women's conference by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and by the Christian radio and television stations in Lima.

More than 7,000 women heard Mrs. Miranda during the two-day conference—the largest crowd ever to participate in this kind of event in Lima. The conference focused on how a woman can find peace in today's turbulent and difficult times. Peru is a country that has been torn by guerrilla warfare and violence, and which is now suffering natural disasters as a result of the El Niño weather patterns.

The audiences responded enthusiastically to Mrs. Miranda's advice on ways to help others, how to restore values and priorities in the family, and how to make changes in the home that produce changes in communities and society.

"There is a tremendous desire to

change and improve family life," said Mrs. Miranda, "and women can make a significant transformation

in today's society, starting with the family. Women can provide moral values, priorities, and guidelines for daily family life as established in the Bible."

Mrs. Miranda is a veteran of radio broadcasting. For the past 19 years she has been writer and speaker for the radio program "Para Ti Mujer" ("For You My Dear Lady"). This program is broadcast by

more than 900 stations and has listeners in 23 countries (Latin America, U.S.A., and Europe). The audience is calculated to be in the tens of millions daily, making Mrs. Miranda, according to *World Vision Magazine*, "the most listened-to woman in Latin America."

"Para Ti Mujer" was a 1997 winner of the Covenant Award, a tangible expression of commendation to producers, programs, networks, stations, and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to faith and family values through the media. The Covenant ministry, which makes the awards, was founded by the Radio-TV Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. "Para Ti Mujer" won the award in the Spanish Ministries Radio Division.

María Miranda and her husband, Juan Carlos (see p. 8), who produces the radio program, are originally from Argentina, where they served in the Argentine Brethren Church. They now have lived for many years in the United States, where they have continued to serve The Brethren Church in various capacities. [†]

All the doors that lead inward to the secret place of the Most High are doors outward—out of self—out of smallness—out of wrong.

— George MacDonald



In Memory

Christine C. Klingensmith, 92, died February 2 in Ashland, Ohio. Mrs. Klingensmith was the wife of the late Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith, a Brethren elder, pastor, Missionary Board executive, and professor at Ashland University and Seminary.

She was born March 5, 1905, in Philadelphia, Pa., the daughter of Louis and Caroline Witter. She was a 1930 graduate of Ashland College and taught first grade in Washington, D.C. (while her husband pastored the Washington Brethren Church), and then for 14 years in Ashland until she retired in 1973. She was a member for many years of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland and served for a time as national patroness of the Sisterhood of Mary and Martha.

She was married June 21, 1934, to J. Ray Klingensmith, who died June 24, 1996. Surviving are a daughter and son-in-law, Janet and Dr. Donald Rinehart of Ashland; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held in the Ronk Memorial Chapel at Ashland Theological Seminary, with Dr. Rinehart, Dr. Arden E. Gilmer, and Rev. Walter H. Schuman officiating.

Memorial gifts may be made to Brethren Care Village/Brookwood Place in Ashland, or to the J. Ray and Christine Klingensmith Scholarship Fund at Ashland University. [†]

Golden Anniversary

Former Brethren missionaries **Rev. Robert and Beatrice Bischof** will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 30th. Their children and the New Paris First Brethren Church will host an open house in their honor on May 31 from 2-5 p.m. at the church facility. The Bischofs served as missionaries in Nigeria, West Africa, from 1952-65, after which Rev. Bischof pastored Brethren churches in Huntington and New Paris, Indiana.

New Wheels for Bonnie Munson

Goshen, Ind. — Bonnie Munson is known by many Brethren across our denomination and is loved by all who know her. For 25 years she served our Lord at Brethren House in St. Petersburg, Fla. During that time she worked with Phil and Jean Lersch in a neighborhood ministry, participated in Christian education workshops across the United States, and helped develop a variety of teaching resources.

For health reasons, Bonnie (54) decided two years ago to move from Florida to Goshen, Ind., where she now lives in an apartment at Greencroft Village, a retirement facility operated by the Mennonite Church.

When Bonnie was seven years old, she contracted polio. For the past 47 years she has been confined to a wheelchair. Recently, her physical condition has helped her make a decision to get a new wheelchair, so that she can remain independent as long as possible. Post polio syndrome has weakened her muscles. When she sits in her present wheelchair, she leans to one side and is unable to breathe properly.

Bonnie is considering a wheelchair made in Sweden that should meet her needs. The back reclines and the footrest lifts, so that when she becomes tired during the day she could recline in the chair and breathe more easily. Now, if she wants to lie down, she has to get out of her wheelchair and into bed, which wears her out completely.

Bonnie is applying for help from Medicare to purchase the chair. Medicare, however, will cover only part of the cost, which is approximately \$24,000. The Goshen First Brethren Church is helping Bonnie with the purchase of this chair and has appointed a committee to oversee this project.

The Goshen Brethren believe that other Brethren might also want to help with this project. Those wishing to do so may send their gifts to the Goshen First Brethren Church, 215 W. Clinton, Goshen, IN 46526. Checks may be made out to the church and should indicate that the gift is for "Bonnie's Chair." The



Bonnie in her present wheelchair.

church hopes to have the money available by the first of April.

— submitted by Rev. Donald Rowser,
Senior Pastor, Goshen First Brethren

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April 1998

Pastoral and Leadership Renewal

By David Cooksey

RENEWAL has many definitions. I found two definitions in the dictionary that were particularly interesting to me as they relate to pastoral and leadership renewal. The first of these two definitions of renewal was "to give new spiritual strength to." The second was "to replace or refill with a fresh supply."

Pastors in the 90s

Being a pastor in the 90s is in many ways very different from what it was 25 years ago, when I entered the pastoral ministry in Kokomo, Indiana. What pastors are called to do has not changed. And the message they are to proclaim has not changed. But the context in which pastors serve is very different.

The spiritual strength of pastors is sapped by the many problems of church people, by uncommitted leadership in the church, and by the lack of respect pastors now encounter. In addition, pastors today are experiencing stress levels never before experienced in pastoral ministry. In order for pastors to stay above these pressures, they need to experience renewal—new spiritual strength and a fresh supply of God's power.

We read in Psalm 51:10-13 (KJV):

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

You probably know the background of this psalm. David, king of Israel, had been confronted by the

prophet Nathan about his sin with Bathsheba. This psalm is David's own account of how he responded after Nathan held this "mirror of truth" before him.

Can you imagine the things that went through David's mind before this? Like anyone in leadership, King David was overwhelmed with things to do, judgments to render, meetings to attend, etc. But in the back of his mind, along with all this clutter, was the knowledge that he was not right

with God. He had a nagging feeling of guilt that something was wrong.

The process of renewal

Nathan's confrontation was a classic "log-in-your-eye" revelation for David. It convicted him of his sin and, at the same time, set in motion the process of renewal. David was now free to say to God:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity and
cleanse me from my sin.*

Psalm 51:1, 2, NIV

David received new spiritual strength and was refilled with a fresh supply of God. A "clean heart" and a "right spirit" were now within him. What a great experience this must have been for him, even though he went through a great deal of pain getting there!



Rev. David Cooksey

In recent months, I have been introduced to the internet. I am fascinated by the way you can use a computer to click on certain words that take you into a whole new level of information, which goes on and on and on. Psalm 51 also has words in it that you can "click on" that take you deeper and deeper into David's experience with sin, repentance, and renewal.

For example, in verse 3 David says, "I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." Obviously, he knew what was wrong, but he chose not to do anything about it until Nathan came and confronted him.

I have also observed this in The Brethren Church and among its leaders. People know their sins, but they overlook them for a "bigger cause," like "being right." David also said that God does not delight in sacrifices, but "The sacrifices of

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue

Renewal

(continued from page 1)

God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart" (v. 17).

Everything that David shares in this psalm is a picture of what needs to happen to us in order for us to experience renewal. Sin is very real in the life of the church and in the lives of those who are a part of the church—sins like rebellion, pride,

disrespect, and many more. In order for renewal to take place, we must confess our sin and experience forgiveness. We must allow God to create in us a new heart and to renew a right spirit within us.

Self-examination is the hardest task most people have to do. We are seldom willing to admit that the process of change and renewal has to start with us. But the fact is that

nobody else can do it for us.

Imagine what would happen in The Brethren Church if every pastor and every church leader experienced renewal this year. God would be pleased to see us with a new heart and a new spirit. And it would do all of us a world of good! [†]

Rev. Cooksey is Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church.

Are You a Saint?

By Kurt Stout

WHEN MOTHER TERESA died in September, discussions began to surface immediately about sainthood. The Roman Catholic Church has a process of evaluation to determine if a person is qualified to become a saint.

There is little debate that Mother Teresa should be included in the list of great spiritual figures of history and that she should be called Saint Teresa. If the process of "canonization" (declaring her a saint) is rushed, this recognition may even come by the end of this century.

Requirements for sainthood

This raises the question, What must a person do to become a saint? According to the Roman Catholic Church, for a person to become a saint that person must have performed at least four miracles; the person's writings need to be above suspicion; and the person's holiness must have been manifested in heroic virtue.

These criteria for sainthood may appear a bit overwhelming. But let me offer some words of hope for those of us who do not meet such high requirements.

Biblical sainthood

Over and over again in Scripture, those who believe in Jesus Christ are called saints. So I want you to know that even though you may not feel like it; and even though you may not act like it; if you have committed your life to Jesus you are a saint.

The word "saint" actually expresses the idea of being "set apart" or "holy." When a person makes a decision to follow Jesus Christ, that person is set apart by God for the purpose of bringing honor and glory to the Lord. In calling us saints, God clearly is offering us a glimpse of hope and purpose. God sees us through the blood of Jesus, and He plans to use us accordingly.

I find the first few verses of many of the New Testament books very interesting. Several books, particularly Paul's letters, begin with a declaration similar to the one found in Romans 1:7— "To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints." Even when the Lord chastises the church for its behavior and its attitude, He begins by reminding church people who they are in Christ Jesus.

God is also reminding us that we are His. We have been "set apart" for righteousness, holiness, and His good pleasure. Let us not forget who we are and whose we are. We are saints, called by God.

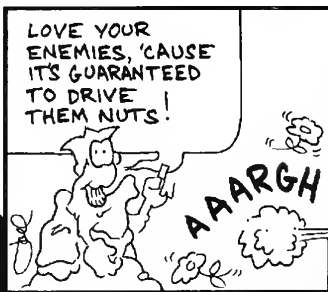
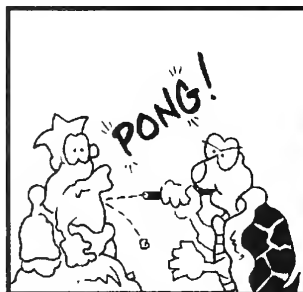
Live like saints

So now that we know this, let's start living like saints and honor the Lord through our lifestyle, our attitude, and our worship. And remember that when the world calls us names and pushes our failures in our faces, God still calls us by another name— "SAINT." [†]

Rev. Stout is associate pastor of the First Brethren Church of North Manchester, Ind. This article originally appeared in the newsletter of the North Manchester Church.

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Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kaufmann

What Will Save You?

By Dan Lawson

ONE of the strangest experiences I have had occurred during a week of summer camp at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana, Indiana. The campers were fifth- and sixth-graders, and I was their Bible teacher for the week.

For reasons known only to the Almighty, one of the boys started a rumor that a necklace that another camper had brought with him was demon-possessed. It was a Chicago Bulls necklace with the head of a bull attached to a long, thin leather cord. The bull, reddish in color, had long horns and a devilish look, and it seemed ready at any second to snort fire and smoke. It was, indeed, a fearsome looking creature.

The rumor spreads

Once the rumor got started, it spread throughout the camp like wildfire. Girls began to have nightmares, and campers were afraid to be left alone, even in broad daylight. Stories of demonic apparitions began to plague the camp, as little minds developed vivid imaginations. Needless to say, staff members had their hands full.

One evening late in the week, things seemed to have calmed down. The campers were in bed, and it appeared that we would have a peaceful night. But appearances can be deceiving.

All of the sudden one of the boys—in that blurry state of consciousness one experiences just before dropping off to sleep, sprang up in bed and shouted that a demon with the head of a bull, snorting fire from its nostrils, had just run past his bed. Pandemonium immediately broke out among the 20 other boys in the room, who raised a commotion that could have raised the dead.

The staff counselor who slept in that room tried to calm the mass hysteria, but he might as well have tried to raise the Titanic. Almost immediately the noise attracted the attention of a nearby counselor, who quickly dispatched a plea for help from the rest of the staff.

"Many people mistakenly believe that their physical presence in a church building on Sunday morning will save them."

When several other staff members and I arrived on the scene, we found most of the boys cowering near the head of their beds in the fetal position. They were whimpering and crying, while clutching their Bibles in front of themselves as a shield against demonic attacks. It took quite some doing to calm their fears and to restore sanity to that room. Eventually, we were able to convince the boys that when Christ is with us, no one can harm us. One by one the boys finally dropped off to sleep in a state of exhaustion, many still clutching their Bibles.

As I left the boys' dorm, it occurred to me that these boys were clutching their Bibles to themselves in the hope that this Book would provide them physical protection. The truth they needed to know, however, is that it is not holding the Bible that protects us, but rather believing what the Bible says. I then realized that many adult Christians have the same misconception.

A mistaken idea

I believe that many people have a mistaken idea about what will save them. In the case of the fear-

ful campers, they thought the physical presence of the Bible would save them, when what they really needed was the presence of Christ in their hearts.

Likewise, many people mistakenly believe that their physical presence in a church building on Sunday morning will save them. Others have the mistaken belief that all they need in order to be saved is to have their name on the membership list of a church. Still others think that just being a good person will save them. All these people have left Jesus on the outside of their lives looking in, as they treat His church as though it were just another social club in which they will participate whenever it suits their fancy.

In chapter 16 of the book of Acts, we read the account of the miraculous release of Paul and Silas from prison. Finding the prison doors open, the jailer was about to kill himself. But Paul stopped him. The jailer brought the two men out and asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul's immediate reply was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (v. 31).

Only one thing will save

People have placed their trust for salvation in many things: in traditions, church membership, church attendance, good moral living, integrity, even in other people. They believe that if they go through all the right motions and do all the right things, God will honor their goodness and give them a secure place in heaven. But in the end, there is only one thing that will save you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

The words of that great old hymn still ring true today: "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." Where have you placed your hope? [†]

Dr. Lawson is pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Indiana. This is the first of a series of articles by Dr. Lawson in which he will apply Bible truth to our personal lives.

Plan now to hear these speakers at General Conference in August

VISUALIZE RENEWAL will be the theme of General Conference August 3-7. Daily themes will focus on renewal of heart, relationships, spirit, a heart for the lost, and the church. A week of *celebration* is planned, with the hope that all who attend Conference will go home as changed individuals.

The Conference will feature four special inspirational speakers. Each will address some aspect of renewal.

Leading off Monday night, and bringing a second message Friday morning, will be **Dr. Terry Wardle**, who has just joined the Ashland Theological Seminary faculty as associate professor of church planting.

Before coming to the seminary, Dr. Wardle was director of the Spring Meadow Retreat Center, a ministry of renewal and restoration for Christian leaders, which he founded in 1996. He is also an experienced



Dr. Terry Wardle

church planter, having begun the Risen King Community Church in Redding, California in August 1989. Today that congregation numbers more than 900 and has planted two daughter congregations.

From 1985 to 1989 he served as director of the Center for Evangelism and as associate professor of evangelism and practical theology at Alliance Theological Seminary. He is the author of four books, the most recent, *Draw Close to the Fire: Finding God in the Darkness*, published this spring by Chosen Books.

The speaker for Tuesday evening will be **Dr. Bruce H. Wilkinson**, founder and president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries. In addition to

his Tuesday-evening message, Dr. Wilkinson will lead an all-conference workshop on Wednesday morning, and then lead a seminar especially for men.

Dr. Wilkinson is recognized as one of the most appreciated and respected communicators of biblical truth in the Body of Christ today. He is a frequent speaker at pastors' conferences, teachers' conventions, and at churches, camps and Christian organizations.

He also serves as a Promise Keepers stadium speaker and has spoken to more than 350,000 men across America in the past three years. At the request of Promise Keepers, he developed the video curriculum *Personal Holiness in Times of Temptation* as part of "The Biblical Manhood" series. He has authored and co-authored numerous books, including *First Hand Faith*, *Talk Thru the Old Testament*, *Talk Thru the New Testament*, and *Talk Thru Bible Personalities*.

Dr. Richard L. Parrott, director of the doctoral studies program at



Dr. Richard Parrott

Ashland Theological Seminary, will be the speaker for the Wednesday evening seminary service. Before joining the seminary adminis-



Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

tration last year, Dr. Parrott served for 23 years as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene, serving most recently as pastor of the Northwest Church of the Nazarene in Columbus, Ohio. He is the author of two books and numerous other publications.

Thursday evening the focus will be on missions, and the speaker for this service will be **Dr. Clive Calver**, president of World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals. Dr. Calver will also bring a message at the World Relief Soup Lunch that same day.

Before taking up the reins at World Relief last year, Dr. Calver lived in London, England, where he served for 14 years as director general of the Evangelical Alliance of the United Kingdom. Under his leadership, this Alliance experienced unprecedented growth (500%) and unity. Calver successfully challenged Alliance members to move beyond the comfort of their buildings to love their neighbors on the



Dr. Clive Calver

streets and in the homeless shelters. A gifted communicator, he was heard by millions of people through the daily newspapers, on the radio, and in high-profile television debates, in which evangelicals earned a prominent voice and a public witness. He is also author of six books and co-author of 13.

More information about other parts of the General Conference program will be presented in next month's issue of the *EVANGELIST*.

Note: Because of a Mid-Ohio stock car race scheduled for the same week, motel accommodations in the Ashland area will be at a premium during Conference. Anyone desiring to stay off campus is advised to make reservations soon. There will be plenty of room, however, in the dormitories on the Ashland University campus. [✚]

The Moral Weight of Leadership

By Billy Graham

*Dr. Billy Graham has received a number of inquiries about his perspective on the moral dimension of leadership in the context of current White House controversies. The following statement by Dr. Graham appeared as an Op-Ed article in the Tuesday, March 17, edition of The New York Times. A copy was sent to the EVANGELIST by the Billy Graham Evangelist Association. It is reprinted by permission. Note the emphasis on **renewal** at the end of the statement.*

REGARDLESS of the outcome of the present investigations into President Clinton's alleged misconduct, the controversy swirling around him has raised one question that must not go unanswered: should those in positions of leadership be held to a higher standard of moral and ethical conduct than ordinary citizens?

Admittedly, on the one hand, those of us who affirm historic Judeo-Christian moral values—values based on what we believe to be God's will as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount—assert that wrong is always wrong, no matter who commits it. The Bible teaches that sin is the breaking of God's moral law. It always has repercussions; "be sure your sin will find you out," the Bible says (Numbers 32:23)—either here or in the next life. None of us can claim to be exempt. The Bible says, "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 8:22-23).

However, those entrusted with leadership—whatever their field—bear a special responsibility to uphold the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct, both publicly and privately. Jesus words in His parable of the faithful and wise manager are still true: "to whom much is given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). Those who have the greatest standing in society—whether clergy, politician, business person, labor leader, athlete, entertainer or anyone else who is a role

model—also have the greatest need of personal integrity.

The question is asked, Why can't we just ignore personal character, as long as a person does the job?

Simply stated, it is because the stakes are too high and the impact on society too far-reaching. John Donne reminded us that no man is an island; what happens to each of us affects the whole. No leader is a moral island, either, and the greater the visibility, the greater the impact.

Influences of moral character

A leader's moral character, first of all, influences the way he or she does his or her job. There simply is no such thing as an impenetrable fire wall between what we do privately and what we do publicly. Can someone who consistently lies or deceives or cheats in his personal life be trusted in a business deal or a courtroom or a political agreement? Should someone who takes bribes or harbors deep-seated racial animosities be given judicial or political power as long as he keeps his behavior or his feelings private? Of course not.

A leader's moral character also influences those who look up to him or her—particularly young people. Why is teen-age pregnancy so rampant? Why are our schools and streets all too often gripped by violence and drugs? Why are the youth of today filled with cynicism and despair? Surely one reason is that they have so few positive role models to follow. The moral meltdown in our country in part results from a failure of leadership.

It has been my privilege to know ten Presidents, some as close friends. I knew most of them before they ever became President and have been in their homes and glimpsed their family lives. I have had long talks with them. All faced temptations and pressures most of us can barely imagine.

Don't get me wrong; most of the Presidents I have known were dedicated and thoughtful men who sin-

cerely sought to serve their country. When I learned later of moral failures or compromises in some instances, it grieved me deeply.

It also made me search my own heart. I feel that people have put me on too high a pedestal; we do the same with other leaders. I know, however, that I am not as good as some people think I am. I have seen men in the depths of wickedness, and I have thought to myself, "There I go, except by the grace of God." I have to depend on God every day to help me live as I should.

Only time will tell whether President Clinton has betrayed the trust we have placed in him as our leader. All politicians have a special responsibility because the people have voted them into office.

I have known President Clinton as a personal friend for many years. I led the inaugural prayer at both of his inaugurations. He first came to hear me preach when he was a boy. I hope and pray, for his sake, the sake of his family and the sake of our nation, that he is not guilty of the thing he is alleged to have done.

We need to pray fervently for him, for everyone involved in this controversy and for our country. The Scripture says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

I know this issue cannot be resolved in a few paragraphs, or by television sound bites, which seldom allow time for balanced discussion and thoughtful reflection. We must not be tempted, however, to divorce character from leadership. That would be tragic.

But ultimately the question of moral character comes down to us as individuals, and to the decision we each must make about our own moral and spiritual foundations. When we point a finger at the President, let's point another finger at ourselves for our sins. Jesus taught that if we even think an immoral act, it is the same in God's sight as the act itself—and that includes all of us.

The greatest need in America at the moment is for a moral and spiritual renewal. This comes, I believe, only as we turn in repentance and faith to the living God, who stands ready to forgive and renew us from within. [✠]

Brethren at Work

A report of the March 17 & 18 meetings of the Ministries Councils and Executive Board

BRETHREN from across the nation converged on Ashland, Ohio, March 17 and 18 to spend two days seeking ways to more effectively fulfill the ministries of the Brethren denomination. They were the members of the Congregational Ministries Council, the Missionary Ministries Council, and the Executive Board. The two councils met on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, and the Executive Board took the afternoon shifts. Following is a sampling of what took place.

Congregational Ministries Council

To set the tone for the Congregational Ministries Council meeting, Rev. David West, Director of Congregational Ministries, reminded council members of the seriousness of their task by calling to mind that the church needs to be in the life-saving business. We need to find the best ways to do the work of God in a world that is dying, he said.

Plans for General Conference were reviewed and discussed (*see p. 4*). This council will again sponsor Table Talks, which have been very popular the past two years. Conference attenders will be able to choose from 30 different 25-minute Table Talks, which focus on ministry ideas *that work*.

Nine Brethren churches have made commitments to participate in the pilot program of the Leadership mentoring process. The nine are North Georgetown, Ohio; Northview Brethren Life (Franklin, Ohio); Sarasota, Fla.; St. Luke (Woodstock, Va.); Elkhart, Ind.; Bloomingdale (Valrico, Fla.); Gretna (Bellefontaine, Ohio); Huntington, Ind.; and Smoky Row (Columbus, Ohio).

The purpose of this process is to build and strengthen congregational leadership, and, through that leadership, to revitalize congregational ministry. The process works by establishing a mentoring relationship between church leadership teams (pastor and lay leaders) and other

experienced leaders. If the pilot program is successful, other churches will be given the opportunity to participate in the process. In the meantime, district and regional workshops and seminars are being held, which provide training opportunities for leaders from all churches.

Rev. West expressed concern about the need for additional pastoral care in The Brethren Church, especially in the areas of education, prevention, intervention, and restoration. Council shared this concern, not only for pastoral care but also for the care of lay leaders. Council authorized formation of a task force or committee to study the issue of leadership care.

Council approved a recommendation by Rev. West that a National Discipleship program be established for Brethren youth that would engage them in intentional discipleship training. This would be a three-stage discipling process that would allow for training, teaching, and mentoring at every stage.

Rev. West also recommended that a candidate for Assistant Director for Youth Programming (or National Youth Leader) be identified, called, and employed. The council included funding for this position in its recommended budget for 1999.

District Crusaders will be serving this summer in the Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Southeastern Districts. Short-term mission trips are being planned to Memphis, Tenn.; Mexico City, Mexico; Juarez, Mexico; Jamaica (the first "overseas" mission trip); and possibly Washington, D.C.

Missionary Ministries Council

In its meetings, the Missionary Ministries Council dealt primarily with United States missions on Tuesday morning and with international missions Wednesday morning.

Northview Brethren Life Church and Vineyard Christian Fellowship, both of Franklin, Ohio, have joined to form Vineyard Community Church.

Co-pastors Mike Sove and Chuck Wolfenbarger are both committed to The Brethren Church. Attendance since the merger in January has averaged 235.

The Southeastern District Mission Board requested that Gateway Brethren Fellowship of Hagerstown, Md., be upgraded from a class to a mission congregation. The council recommended this change to the Executive Board (*which approved the change*).

Rock Springs Community Church, the new Brethren congregation being planted by Pastor Jim Boyd in Vista, Calif., had a "soft launch" on March 15 that went very well. The grand opening service is planned for October 4, 1998.

Rev. Gene Bell, director of an inner-city work in Indianapolis, Ind., has been authorized by the Indiana District Mission Board to raise funds for personal and program support among the Indiana District churches. Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries, will write a letter of endorsement.

Jeff Kaplan, who has been called by the Midwest District to serve as a church-planter in Douglas County Colo., met with the council and shared his plans and needs.

Director Smith reported on his recent overseas trips. He said that highlights of the trip to India were having his wife Cindy along, seeing the growth in Sudhir Kumar, meeting Latha Kumar (Sudhir's bride), ordaining Sudhir, dedicating a new church building donated by Bob and Alberta Holsinger, watching the mobile medical clinic in action, and seeing 107 people baptized following the Indian annual conference.

Highlights of the Malaysian leg of this trip included getting to know Pastor David and Lilly Chew, dedicating the new church building in Penang, and working with the Loi family.

Highlights of his January trip to Peru included staying with the Antunezes in their home, seeing the growth of the church, and watching Miguel minister in the community. He is an active personal evangelist everywhere he goes.

Rev. Smith reported that he would visit Brethren mission work in Colombia, South America, March 19-23. The purposes of this trip

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



May-June 1998

Volume 11, Number 5

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Last month I wrote about "Counting Our Blessings." Before you read it, you received word that my cancer had returned with a "mass" on the right side of my brain. But—guess what—I am still counting my blessings. I have finished 15 radiation treatments and lost my hair—again! I am back to wearing my wig. Other than being tired, I feel good. I have started back to work full-time and am keeping busy. I have seen all of my doctors, had another MRI, and now I'm waiting for further word from the doctors as to what they will do after they look at the MRI.

Thanks to all of you for your beautiful cards and meaningful notes. They mean a lot to me. Also, thanks for all of the many prayers. I can feel them each and every day. Keep praying!

We have "talked about prayer" in the past. I read in a book that "Prayer is not merely going to God with a shopping list for things we want Him to do for us and for our families. Rather it is being in a relationship with Him, listening to Him and sharing our hearts with Him." We are talking to the Almighty God. He is the God who hears, the God of peace, the God who forgives. He is in control. His love is perfect so, when we pray, we need to take time to listen to Him, to hear what He is saying to us. In I Thessalonians 5:16-18, we read, "Rejoice always.

(continued on page 4)

The 30th Anniversary of W.M.S. in Argentina

Two Trip Reports . . .

. . . first from Marilyn Aspinall:

Last year about springtime I received an emotional letter. It was from a special friend, Doris Silvestri, an Argentine W.M.S. board member, extending an invitation for me to speak at the Annual W.M.S. Conference in October. They would be celebrating 30 years of the organization and work of the W.M.S. in Argentina. I had had the privilege of being there with the original organizers, and had also been the invited speaker on their 25th anniversary just before we left Argentina as missionaries.

I was humbled, thrilled, moved, and felt a rush of indescribable emotions, but, at the time, I really saw no possibility of going. A letter was sent to acknowledge the invitation and to thank them. I asked them to pray, but gave little hope of being able to join them for such a special celebration.

Time passed as I shared with family and friends all that I was experiencing . . . and hoping. In a conversation with Kathy Rosales, my daughter, she said, "Mommy, if you don't make known a need, no one can supply it."

I responded that I have never asked for money and that it would be hard to do. Her words echoed in my mind, until I could stand it no longer. I prayed and asked God to guide my words as I wrote and sent out a letter to a few people.

In the meantime, I was asked to teach Spanish again at a nearby Christian school in the area. At the same time, I heard Jim Thomas tell about his vision for "Eagle's Nest." The Lord put it on my heart to give my first paycheck to that project. I

spoke softly to Him, explaining that I had a dream and a project on *my* heart too, but that I had heard Him loud and clear. I slipped my first paycheck in an envelope and took it out to the mailbox early the next morning. At noon in our box there was a check toward my trip from a friend in Bryan, not even a member of our church. She said that the Lord told her to give me this. The next day I received another offering, and those two gifts more than paid back my salary, which was on its way to "Eagle's Nest!"

To shorten the story, God's Word to us in Malachi is a promise which I experienced as funds began to roll in. My ticket plus the ground travel for both me and my good friend and traveling companion, Louise Bishop, were abundantly covered, in addition to gifts to some loving and kind hearts in Argentina, which could be left mostly anonymously. God is so good! His promise of "abundant life" is real!

The details all began to go together rapidly. The very fact that we had just finished an extensive study on the book of James with a ladies' group in my home supplied me with material for practical Christian living, which I shared happily in my "heart language." Louise shared a short devotional also in one of our meetings. The ladies loved her for who she is—a sister in the Lord—and because she began by saying "Buenos Dias, Amigas!"

There were over 200 present at the Edén Camp for the conference. Then there were well over 300 at the Saturday night banquet at the local "Club" in the "pueblo" of Soldini. Space won't allow for sharing

(continued on page 2)

30th Anniversary (continued)

exciting details of all that went on . . . What a refreshing time!

A plus was that I was able to visit places I had never been able to see all those years we lived in Argentina, including the only Brethren Church I had never been privileged to visit as well as the lovely new Colón Church.

The W.M.S. is "alive and well" in Argentina. They have their struggles too, but they know and serve the same powerful God we serve . . . and He is able. I repeat, "God is so good." Both Louise and I are so thankful for all we experienced because of the generosity and prayers of many here, as well as the goodness of God's people in Argentina. I can only say, "Praise the Lord!"

. . . And from Louise Bishop:

The Lord is so very good! He blessed me by allowing me to be the traveling companion (October 7-23, 1997) of Marilyn Aspinall, who was the speaker at the ladies' 30th anniversary conference of the Argentine W.M.S. Not only did Marilyn know the country and the language, but she has great influence also. Because of her contacts, our names were mentioned twice on the radio, so everyone around Buenos Aires knew of our presence.

In addition, there was an article in the "El Pueblo" concerning our participation, along with Rev. Reilly Smith, Dr. Buzz Sandberg, Dr. Fred Finks, and ATS friend Harley Gerber, at the beautiful church in Colón.

As we were greeted at the airport by our hosts, Alberto and Irma Sotola and their daughter, Lizzie (a journalist), I commented on their friendliness and loving spirit. Someone said, "Everyone in Argentina is like this." They were right.

At the conference I found everyone loving, friendly, open, accepting, and always giving gifts. Many spoke English, but were hesitant at first. Their love and devotion to the Lord were very evident. It was an honor to share devotions with this group. The love and devotion to their families were examples that we should adopt in North America. I'm not very adventuresome in my choice of food, but everything was delicious, fresh, and beautifully served.

Eusebio and Doris Silvestri, administrators at Camp Edén, were excellent hosts, making us feel at ease by supplying our every need, going out of their way to feed and entertain us during our stay at Soldini. I experienced part of their custom at the women's banquet. It was scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. At 10:15 we were served a full course by appropriately dressed waiters. Another custom that was easy to follow was the afternoon "siesta!"

I noticed the crowded conditions, with most homes gated or surrounded by walls. And housewives went to the local market every day. In the midst of these crowded conditions (and terrific traffic!) there were many small parks with green grass where families gathered, especially on weekends. I was told that they do not cut down trees for new or widening highways, but that they move them.

We were privileged to worship at the Soldini and Colón Churches, and at the Olivos Church in Buenos Aires, which meets in the home of Pastor Rodriguez. The Colón Church, which is one of the fastest growing Brethren churches in Argentina, is filled with people enthusiastic for the Lord. We, along with the group from Ashland and missionary Allen Baer, were served a lovely dinner in the church's dining hall. Rooms are available for overnight guests. They have nurses available, an emergency room, and an ambulance, which was provided by the city of Rockford, Illinois.

We were privileged to be guests at a meal with Daniel Rosales' parents at Villa Constitución. I can see where Daniel gets his heart for evangelism, as his mother is a beautiful, humble Christian with a desire to share her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was humbled as I thought about these lovely people who live in a different land and culture, and speak a difference language. We all worship the same God . . . the same God that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshiped. God is so great! I thank God for allowing me to witness the great reunions that took place between Marilyn and her friends of many years. One woman said, "Pinch me, Marilyn. I can't believe you are here."

District Doings



Susan Kidd, the SOUTHEASTERN District President, has sent the reminder of their special day, Saturday, April 25, hosted by the Hagerstown W.M.S. ladies. The day's program begins at 9:00 and concludes at 3:30. A special speaker, lunch, and a craft afternoon are included in the registration fee of \$10-15. This is a good day for you to invite unchurched friends and other ladies in your church who do not belong to W.M.S.

A brief business meeting is necessary to (1) review and accept the district goals for 1998-99; (2) choose the Ashland Theological Seminary scholarship recipient; (3) elect officers; (4) receive the project offering for the new work starting in Winchester, VA, by Mike and Barbara Woods and Chris and Heather Scott; and (5) receive the district dues of \$2.00 per member.

From the MIDWEST district, Sara Hanna wrote about the Ugly Quilt sleeping bags, which the ladies of the Mulvane, Kansas, Brethren Church make for the district project. This "Brothers' Keeper" quilting was introduced several years ago by Jim and Flo Wheatley and is a real blessing when they distribute the sleeping bags to the homeless in the community for their warmth.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
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Women's Outlook Newsletter

Ladies, I am pleased to introduce to you . . .

PENNY

Penny Knouff is the literature secretary. She is a daughter of Rev. and Mrs. George (Jessie) Solomon.

Penny writes, "I praise the Lord for my Christian home and upbringing. I also thank God for my Christian husband, David. We have been married 31 years and serve as deacon and deaconess at the Brethren Bible Church. I chair the finance and pastoral relations committees, as well as serving on our social committee and being president of the W.M.S. This year my daughter, Holly, and I are co-directors of our Vacation Bible School."

In addition to David, Penny's family includes her married daughter, Holly, a son, one granddaughter, and two surrogate grandsons.

Penny and Holly have started their own business called Heavenly Messengers. They make many different kinds of angels and sell them through a crafters shop and craft shows. They wanted the business to serve the Lord in a special way, so each angel carries a Scripture verse to tell the purchasers about the Lord's love for them. Her other interests are sewing and reading. David says that when Penny starts to read a good book, she forgets the world around her! Prior to beginning Heavenly Messengers, Penny managed two different bookstores.

Penny concludes, "I love the Lord and want to serve Him to the fullest. I have enjoyed preparing the 1998 book list and appreciate the opportunity to serve as the literature secretary." Penny and her family live in Louisville, Ohio.

and . . .

JANET

Janet Rufener is the assistant treasurer. Janet was born and lived in Warsaw, Indiana, until she finished fifth grade. During those years, she was reared in the Brethren Church and was baptized by the Rev. Robert Holsinger. When Janet's older sister, Beverly, started Ashland College as a freshman, the entire family moved to town.

In time, Janet enrolled at AC for night classes, while working during

the day at the Brethren Publishing Company and then the Seminary library. When Janet began to work for General Telephone Company, she made a decision that she later regretted—she quit college. She met her future husband, Ken, at GTE. Janet has also worked at a farm implement store and is currently an accounts receivable clerk for Mansfield Plumbing Products in Perrysville, Ohio. She and Ken have one son, Christopher, one of God's blessings. He will graduate from Ashland University next year.

Janet's hobbies and interests are varied: counted cross-stitch, books, music, growing things, and traveling. She is a member of the Joy Circle at Ashland Park St. Like many of us, after a hard day at work, she is tired and ready to stay at home, instead of attending the meeting. However, "I am always blessed when I attend. We have wonderful programs and we do good work for the Lord and He blesses us greatly!" Janet and her family live in Ashland.

LOOK!

SEWING AND WORLD RELIEF

Joan Merrill, coordinator, reminds you to send quilt squares. Here are the guidelines:

- (1) Use all-cotton fabric. Please be sure the finished size is at least 8½" with design less than 8".
- (2) Make your designs needlework (embroidery, cross-stitch, applique, pieced, etc.). Do not use fabric paints, etc. The needlework adds to the beauty of the projects.
- (3) Squares can be sent anytime to Joan at 9300 S. St. Rt. 3, Muncie, IN 43702.

Thanks to all of you who have already sent your squares. I am beginning to plan for this year's auction.

God bless you,

Joan

Joan Merrill

Missionary Miscellany

Reilly and Cindy Smith had a very enjoyable time visiting in India and Malaysia. They appreciated all your prayers for their health and safety while traveling. Highlights of their trip were meeting Sudhir Kumar's bride, Latha; participating in Sudhir's ordination; and dedicating the new worship center in Penang with David and Jenny Loi.

Reilly recently returned from a short trip to Medellín, Colombia, where he met with Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri and other church leaders. The church which Marcelo pastors was "packed out" and Reilly was able to be of encouragement.

Pray for **Todd and Tracy Ruggles**, as they are in the process of trying to adopt a baby in Mexico. They hope to hear something very soon.

Jennifer Thomas has decided to stay on with Spearhead in Mexico City for another year! She is currently helping the Ruggles in their ministry.

Please keep **Tom and Tiona Conrad** in your prayers. Tom's father recently passed away; his mother is in poor health; and his brother died approximately one year ago. Please pray for their comfort and healing.

Continue to pray for **Tom and Debbie Sprowls** and their little family. Their young congregation and their young children need TLC.

The **South American Theological Seminary** had its opening service on March 15 and classes began March 16! Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez have worked hard at this task. Please keep them and the students in your prayers.



President's Pen (continued)

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

When you read this, the weather should be warm and we should be thinking about planting our flowers. I hope this will be true. I am ready for some sunshine and warm weather. Watching new life in the trees, flowers, and other things that will be blooming is really a beautiful sight to see. This is a time we need to thank God for so many things. To be able to *SEE, SMELL, AND HEAR* all of the things of Springtime—what a blessing.

There are so many things we take for granted each day. I am having some trouble walking, but I remember how much I took for granted being able to walk to and from work. I will no longer take that for granted.

In several districts, Conferences and Rallies are soon, while in others they are past. These are good times to renew acquaintances with friends. Make sure you send a report of your rally or district meeting to Joan Ronk. We all love to read what other districts are doing.

Marilyn Aspinall, the W.M.S. national vice president, has asked for names of anyone who would help at General Conference. Marilyn needs names of volunteers for special music, devotions, and pianist for the W.M.S. meetings. I am also looking for "volunteers" to serve on the nominating, credential, and auditing committees. Please let either Marilyn or me know if you can help. Putting together the conference program is not an easy job, so your volunteer service will be very helpful.

I hope you enjoy your summer and I look forward to seeing all of you at Conference in Ashland the week of August 3.

God Bless You,

Shirley

P.S. I was just ready to mail this to Joan, when my husband called and said one of my doctors had called to say the MRI looked excellent! The tumor had shrunk, the fluid was gone, and there were no new lesions. He said the doctors will meet

again next week and discuss this again. As it looks now, they will not do anything for three months. Praise the Lord! Thanks again for your prayers.

Shirley Black

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

The W.M.S. year is nearly over, and now is the time to check progress on your commitments: for your personal, spiritual growth, remember your daily devotions. I hope several of you have read more than the suggested two reading circle books. They are outstanding. Concentrate on visitors and prospective members—spring and summer months are good times to acquaint others with your organization. Schedules aren't so crowded and your meetings may be informal.

Election of officers, reports, and decisions of conference offerings are items which need consideration. The names of your officers (even if they are re-elected) and reports need to be sent to the general secretary, Nancy Hunn, 555 W. Market St., Nappanee, IN 46550, by June 30.

Your offerings are used in this manner: thank-offerings are distributed to Campus Ministry, Riverside

SEE THIS

The W.M.S. Directory (January-February) needs minor corrections.

Under NATIONAL W.M.S. OFFICERS, Sewing and World Relief Coordinator, the area code for Joan Merrill should be: 765.

In the SOUTHEASTERN District, the St. Luke society, Bettie Cook's address should be: 1049 Wisman Rd.

In the INDIANA District, Nappanee society, Sue Hinton's phone number should be: 219-773-7272. For the New Paris society, the zip code for Gerry Swartz should be: 46567-2035.

Nancy Hunn, the editor of the *Devotional Guide*, seeks ideas for different or unusual meetings, as well as refreshment suggestions. Please send your ideas to Nancy at 555 W. Market St., Nappanee, IN 46550.

Christian School, and the W.M.S. Scholarship at Ashland University. The offering from the special ministry or service helps to underwrite the dean's chair at Ashland Theological Seminary; dues are used for publications and other expenses. The project offering is designated for the Edén Bible Institute (now called South American Theological Seminary), a Brethren theological school in Argentina.

The very first commitment, "Have personal daily devotions, including Bible reading and prayer," is the most important commitment. The time of day or evening doesn't matter, so fit this time into your personal schedule. If too much confusion interferes, read the Scripture aloud to yourself. You don't need to be "preachy;" it is a good aid for concentration.

May and June are the family special days—days specified to honor mothers, children, and fathers. They are mixed with graduations and weddings. Throughout the Scriptures we can read guidelines for our behavior. Paul's letters are direct in improving our relationships with family members, especially Ephesians 5 and 6.

One of the favorite or discouraging references for women is Proverbs 31:10-31. Annually part of this chapter is used as either a tribute or a challenge. Changing from the dread of hearing this to admiration, Mary Hunt (*The Financially Confident Woman*, Broadman and Holman Pub.) now sees this section as an example worth emulating.

This year, when you hear these verses, instead of being chagrined or pious, read Romans 16. Paul's greetings to his friends in Rome include women (Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Julia, and Persis) who served. Sounds like the original W.M.S.—women meant to serve! So don't worry about being the virtuous woman; be a worker in full-time Christian service, whether a plumber, doctor, ditch-digger, home-maker, tent-maker. I am a full-time child of God and my daily work is dedicated to Him.

Your friend,

Joan
Joan

Women's Outlook Newsletter

would be to work with missionaries Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri, to answer questions and offer encouragement, and to meet with the national committee to discuss the Campo Valdes church and other issues.

Other notes of interest about international missions: Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez need a car for their work with the South American Theological Seminary, and an effort is being made to help them obtain one. Jennifer Thomas has decided to stay a second year in Mexico City with Spearhead. She is currently working with Todd and Tracy Ruggles. Vincent Edwin, son-in-law of Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar, is attending a Bible institute in Export, Pa.

It was recommended that the council provide financial assistance so that Señor José Rivero, President of The Brethren Church in Argentina, could attend the second Brethren World Assembly in Bridgewater, Va., this summer, as well as General Conference in August. (*The Executive Board approved this request.*)

Executive Board

The Executive Board handled various items referred to it by the two councils, plus dealing with agenda items of its own.

Upon the recommendation of both councils, Executive Board adopted as policy a paper entitled "Qualifications and Responsibilities for Ministries Council Representatives," to be used in selecting council members.

The planting of new Brethren churches in Phoenix, Ariz., Delaware, Ohio, and Douglas County, Colo., was approved, as recommended by the Missionary Ministries Council.

Upon the recommendation of Ashland Theological Seminary, the board voted to name the seminary's new church-planting chair in honor of the late Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith, longtime professor at Ashland University and Seminary. This chair is being funded by the seminary and The Brethren Church. Dr. Terry Wardle is the new associate professor of church planting (*see p. 4*).

Budget requests from both councils were received and approved, subject to final adoption by General

Conference. The Congregational Ministries budget projects income of \$563,600 and total expenses of \$564,255, for a net loss of \$655. The Missionary Ministries budget projects income of \$1,011,000 and expenses of \$1,006,681, for a net gain of \$4,319.

The task force for promoting General Conference 2000 at Estes Park, Colo., reported plans to prepare a promotional video for the Conference, a copy of which will be sent to every church. It was noted that travel subsidy in its usual form will not likely be available, but that some subsidy funds will probably be on hand. Churches are challenged to plan to subsidize their own dele-

gates to the Conference, including their youth.

The task force to study Fair Share and other alternatives for financing the work of the denomination reported that a questionnaire was being prepared to solicit input for their study. (*This was distributed with the April 3 Leadership Letter.*)

Final note

If you have questions about the work of either of the ministries councils or suggestions of ways they might serve the church more effectively, please contact your district council representatives. They are your representatives, and they desire your input. [✠]

New Life Ministries hosts council to consider Anabaptist witness in our postmodern society

"A NABAPTIST WITNESS in a Postmodern Society" was the theme of the first-ever Anabaptist Evangelism Council, hosted by New Life Ministries. The council was held February 21-22 in Elgin, Ill.

Five members of The Brethren Church were among the 29 people from four New Life Ministries partner denominations who attended the council. They were Emanuel Sandberg, David West, Dale Stoffer, Frederick Finks, and Ronald W. Waters.

The two-fold purpose of the meeting was to provide a plenary session on an evangelism-related theme, and to give agencies working in various aspects of evangelism and church vitality an opportunity to network.

In commenting on the impetus for the meeting, one participant recalled the words of George Brunk III in an earlier consultation—that Anabaptists have, for 70 years, worked together in social ministry around the world under an umbrella organization, and perhaps it is time for them to do likewise in the areas of evangelism, congregational renewal, and church planting.

The emphasis of the plenary session was to envision a model for Anabaptist witness that will enable congregations to more consistently reflect the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ in our postmodern society. Lois Barrett of the General Conference Mennonite Church

noted that the Anabaptist world view is "extramodern," standing outside the dominant culture of North America. "I am not asking how Anabaptism might adapt itself to postmodernism. I want to go beyond contextualization to talk about how we might be both nonconformed and engaged with the dominant culture around us," she said.

Dale Stoffer of The Brethren Church suggested that a narrative approach to evangelism, which is thoroughly Anabaptist, may be the most effective approach. "We need to be able to tell three stories well: God's story of His redemptive work that culminates in Jesus Christ; my individual story of how God's story has transformed my life; and our community story that shows that God's story can authentically reshape an entire social group."

Paul Munday of the Church of the Brethren emphasized the importance of developing missionary congregations and leadership, recognizing generational preferences, accepting that we can offer no easy answers to the challenges of daily living, and relating Christology to the confusion all around us. "It's time to lift persons into the light. It's time to lift persons out of confusion into clarity, out of error into meaning, out of iniquity into righteousness," he said.

(continued on page 9)

Evangelical leaders face today's issues at the 56th annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals

HUNDREDS of Christian leaders representing 49 evangelical denominations gathered in Orlando, Fla., March 2-4 for the 1998 Evangelical Summit, the 56th annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Attending from The Brethren Church were Dr. Emanuel and Ann Sandberg, Dr. Fred Finks, Rev. David Cooksey, and Dr. Juan Carlos and Maria Miranda.

During the three-day meeting, NAE members were inspired, informed, and committed to united action on key issues of the day.

At the opening session of the Summit, NAE President Don Argue told about his meeting—just days before the convention—with Chinese government officials. Argue visited six cities in China as part of a delegation seeking an open dialogue with the highest Chinese officials about religious freedom in China.

"We observed [that] for the 'registered' church there is freedom within the parameters of 'normal religious activity' as defined by the government," Argue told convention attendees. "For example, those churches operating under the auspices of

China's official religious organizations can worship and teach the faithful in places designated for such activities. They also can publish some religious writing, carry out works of compassion and social service.

"But for the 'unregistered' (house) churches—which includes most evangelicals—those same freedoms do not exist. Those outside the official sphere are subject to pressure, harassment, even detention or imprisonment for their beliefs, although treatment of local believers varies widely from place to place," he said.

"We learned in our meetings with the highest government officials, including China's President Jiang Zemin, that they realize any Sino-U.S. talks must include discussions about religious freedom. That is a step which we are happy for, but we know that we cannot let up on the issue because millions of our brothers and sisters still cannot worship freely in China," he added. "The National Association of Evangelicals will continue to speak out against persecution of Christians and other religious believers and take action on their behalf."

During the convention other leading evangelicals also offered messages of inspiration and challenge to NAE members. Author and thinker Os Guinness asked why there are so many Christians in the U.S. whose faith has made so little impact on our culture. He urged evangelicals to avoid becoming panderers to popular opinions and trends. Christians need to remember that they solely serve an audience of one: God. When we are concerned only about serving God, then we will have an impact on our world.

Leonard J. Hofman, retiring chair of NAE's board, challenged mem-

Ministry to Senior Adults

(Part of a resolution adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals)

The senior adult population in the United States of America is growing three times more rapidly than the national population rate. In spite of this fact, only 1% of the churches surveyed have a director of adult ministry, while 80% of the same churches have a volunteer or paid youth worker.

* * * * *

Senior adults sometimes possess physical limitations yet one survey shows that few churches provide ramps, elevators, large-print hymnals, or adequate sound systems to accommodate some of those needs. Rather than face such obstacles to worship, study and enrichment, many senior adults just do not go to church.

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), in recognizing the needs of senior adults, issues a call to its constituent bodies for the development and implementation of aggressive ministries to senior adults which should include the following minimum objectives:

- The development of training and methodology for reaching senior adults, both for salvation and spiritual growth;
- An informed and sensitive response to the needs of senior adults through the development of diverse local church-based ministries;
- A spiritually-based focus of care for senior adults;
- The provision of appropriate ministry opportunities for senior adults.

[✚]

Pornography and Obscenity

(Part of a resolution adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals)

* * * * *

As members of the National Association of Evangelicals, we are therefore [for reasons given in prior statements] committed to educating both our members and the broader culture about the harm of pornography. To facilitate that commitment, we encourage our member denominations to take official action at their national governing bodies, and to implement an educational process that will protect God's people from the impact of pornography.

We encourage pastors and congregations to protect their youth and children from exposure to these materials. We call upon leaders of businesses, schools and libraries as well

as parents to participate in an effort to protect children and youth from being harmed by these materials.

We also urge local, state, and federal agencies to prosecute aggressively those who break the law in producing and distributing illegal pornography or who operate illegal sex businesses.

Lastly, we call upon all leaders of the broader faith community, all persons of goodwill and especially representatives of the evangelical community to be "salt and light" in protecting people from the harm of pornography, obscenity and sex businesses. We also call upon these same people to join together in their own communities to win the battle against pornography and obscenity through education, appropriate law enforcement efforts and by helping those who have been harmed. [✚]

bers to use the association's network of 49 denominations to speak with a united voice on current issues; engage in racial reconciliation; contribute to works of mercy beyond the local church; and offer an effective voice to the U.S. government.

Carol Childress, a demographic expert from the Leadership Network, called on evangelicals to employ new methods to reach the 70 percent of the U.S. population born after 1945—

Housing for the Least of These

(Part of a resolution adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals)

More than 25% of the world's population lacks adequate shelter. The need for adequate affordable housing crosses all national boundaries and generational lines.

* * * * *

Recognizing the necessity to put faith into action, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) seeks to raise awareness of the need for adequate shelter for families around the world. Therefore, we resolve to challenge our individual members and member organizations to become partners with people in need of adequate affordable housing.

This partnership begins with a commitment to regular prayer for those in need of adequate shelter. We also suggest participation in the observance of the International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat on the third Sunday in September of each year.

Beyond prayer, we also call upon the members of the NAE to partner with our relief and development arm, World Relief, and other organizations involved in housing efforts by providing labor and funds.

Affirming that we have been called to a living, active faith, we seek to match our words with our deeds. We commit to proclaim the good news of God's redemption of humankind with our mouths and our hands. We will pray for those who suffer because of inadequate housing, we will work together to build homes for families in need in our communities, and we will give financially so that more families around the world will have access to affordable housing. * * * * * [†]

Declaration for Public Education

(Part of a resolution adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals)

Whereas, we as Christians recognize our biblical duty to teach our children; and as citizens of the United States recognize today that mothers and fathers desire a hope and a future for their children;

Whereas, public schools were founded as one of the means of educating future generations to be capable of assuming their responsibilities as citizens, discover truth and develop moral character;

* * * * *

Be it resolved, as followers of

people who are primarily unchurched. She described the world in which the church is to minister as one in great transition. This time of rapid change requires evangelicals to reach out to younger generations as if they were a mission field; focus more on missions than institutions; and offer people the "person" of Jesus Christ—not church programs.

At the closing banquet of the convention, Dr. Clive Calver, the new president of NAE's World Relief, called on American evangelicals to mobilize to change and save the world. "Changing nations for God is a present-day possibility, but only by standing together will evangelical churches in the U.S.A. demon-

strate this nation-changing potential," he said.

During the convention, NAE members took action on several key issues of the day. They unanimously approved resolutions dealing with pornography, ministries to senior adults, housing, and public education. (*Portions of these resolutions are found on these two pages.*)

At the end of the summit, Chairman Lamar Vest announced that NAE would immediately begin a search for a new president. This follows Don Argue's announcement earlier this year that he would become president of Northwest College in Kirkland (Seattle), Wash., after May 15, 1998. [†]

Anabaptist Evangelism Council

(continued from page 7)

Linford Stutzman of the Mennonite Church stressed the importance of a powerful apologetic in the midst of pluralism. "In a free market, we can compete and win because Jesus has a monopoly on truth—He is truth. He is the way of emancipation, and the church can demonstrate that," he said.

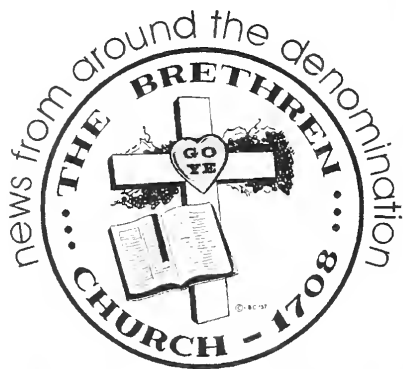
During the meeting, the various agencies that were represented at the council were given opportunities to share with one another about their ministries and how they are trying to address Anabaptist witness in a postmodern world. Breaks and meal times also gave agency representatives a chance to network with one another and to identify areas of similar ministry.

A portion of the meeting was also devoted to visioning how the various agencies might effectively work together and identifying the role New Life Ministries might play in fostering inter-denominational and inter-agency cooperative ministries.

At the end of the council, participants agreed overwhelmingly to meet again, with the next meeting set for February 20-21, 1999, in the Chicago area.

New Life Ministries, which hosted the council, is the successor to The Andrew Center. The mission of New Life Ministries is to multiply the number of persons turning to Jesus Christ by multiplying the number of leaders and congregations that are spiritually alive and evangelistically effective.

— reported by Ronald W. Waters



Jesse Fiant, at 100, the oldest member of the College Corner Brethren Church, with the two youngest "members," Michael Klinger (l.) and Justin Lawson. Above them is a birthday card for Mrs. Fiant signed by members of the church.

Member at College Corner celebrates 100th birthday

Wabash, Ind. — Jesse Fiant, the oldest member of the College Corner Brethren Church, celebrated her 100th birthday on March 3.

On Sunday morning, March 1, members of the College Corner Church signed a huge birthday card for Mrs. Fiant. Then after the morning worship service, they went to her house and sang "Happy Birthday" to her and the "Doxology."

Despite her age, Mrs. Fiant lives alone and takes care of herself. She is in relatively good health, but is no longer able to attend church services. She joined the College Corner Church on November 21, 1914.

— reported by Pastor Jim Black



Rev. David West (c.) supervizes, while Jim Cunningham (l.) and Bloomingdale Pastor Glenn Rininger get the floor ready for new carpet.

Bloomingdale Church improves its facilities with view to attracting others in the community

Valrico, Fla. — The Bloomingdale Brethren Church of Valrico was blessed recently with improvements to its facilities. During the final days of February, new carpet was purchased and installed in the fellowship hall, classrooms, and offices.

The church had been collecting a carpet fund for a number of months. Then an opportunity arose they couldn't pass up. Rev. David West, Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church, was able to negotiate the purchase of carpet at a fantastically reduced price. Furthermore, Rev. West volunteered to help lay the carpet.

West, who did this kind of work before he entered the pastoral ministry, was scheduled to come to Florida for the Florida District Conference on March 1. So he arranged to arrive in Florida a few days early to install the carpet. He brought with him his son Jonathan as well as Jim Cunningham, a member of the national Brethren Youth In Christ Steering Committee.

The finishing touches were put on the project when Mike Lumpiesz of the Bloomingdale Church painted the fellowship hall, and a team of men expanded one of the classrooms by removing a dividing wall.

"We are so grateful to God for working out all the details to bring this project about," said Glenn Rininger, pastor of the Bloomingdale Church. "From providing the funds to helping David arrange his schedule and getting us a fabulous price [on the carpet], the Lord has really encouraged the church by allowing us to upgrade our facility."

This project is part of a concerted effort by the congregation to make its church facility more attractive to the surrounding community. Plans call for outside painting and landscaping, as well as a new sign.

Attendance currently averages in the upper forties for Sunday morning worship at Bloomingdale. But when Bloomingdale Avenue is widened in 1999, the church will be positioned physically to attract drive-by seekers. "We want to do all we can to say to those who see our facility as they go by that we are an active and attractive place in which to worship," says Pastor Rininger.

"When you come to Florida on vacation or business, please drop by and see us," he urges. "There are some great retirement home values around here, too!" The church building is located at 1310 Bloomingdale Avenue, E., in Valrico. [✠]



Janet Solomon to lead short-term mission trips

Mansfield, Ohio — Former Brethren missionary Janet Solomon will lead four short-term mission trips this summer, three to Mexico and one to London. The purpose of the trips is to distribute recordings of the gospel message to people who do not know Jesus Christ.

In Mexico, various indigenous Indian groups will be targeted. In London, the focus will be on reaching Muslim immigrants with the gospel. The gospel cassettes are recorded in the native ("heart") language of the people to whom they are given. On each trip recordings will be shared with approximately 300 families. Since families usually share these recordings with other family members and friends, the 300 recordings have a potential audience of 30,000.

Mrs. Solomon still has openings on some of these trip. Dates, destinations, and costs of the trips are as follows: (1) May 27–June 14, Caborca, Mexico, \$777; (2) June 24–July 8, Baja Peninsula, Mexico, \$777; (3) July 9–28, London, \$1,450; (4) July 29–August 12, Mexico, \$700.

For more information, contact Mrs. Solomon by phone at 419-756-5900. [✝]

California Court upholds Scouts

In two unanimous decisions, the California Supreme Court ruled in March that the Boy Scouts, like other private organizations, can set its own standards for membership. Thus Scouts in California will not be coerced to accept professing homosexuals, atheist, or agnostics as Scoutmasters or members.

The California ruling contradicts a New Jersey Court of Appeals decision handed down earlier in March that compelled Scouts in that state to admit openly homosexual men into leadership positions. [✝]

California Brethren churches make history with joint Sunday morning worship service

Manteca, Calif. — It was advertised as "Brethren History in the Making." Three Brethren churches—Northgate Community Brethren, Hope Brethren, and Stockton Brethren—coming together for Sunday worship. It happened on March 8, 1998.

It seemed odd, since it had never been done before. But it proved to be a great opportunity to celebrate Jesus and to show love and concern for one another.

Pastor Bernie Tuazon of the Hope Brethren Church welcomed the congregations and brought them to the throne of grace. A choir of 25 singers and musicians—known as the Fil-MAPS Chorale (Filipino Medical & Allied Professional Services)—provided special music during the service. The music was glorious; the preaching by Pastor Chuck Poindexter of the Stockton Church was powerful; and the fellowship

was loving. How good it is for brothers and sisters to come together—not in uniformity, but in unity!

Jesus is either our peace or He isn't. We acted as if He is. He has either broken down dividing walls, or He hasn't. We acted as if He has.

The denominational focus on World Relief Sunday was observed as well. The offering was taken in a wheelbarrow accompanied by a challenge to fill it up.

At the conclusion of the service, we packed the Fellowship Hall for a soup and bread luncheon. The menu offered Philippine soup, Cambodian soup, traditional vegetable soup, and Navy bean soup.

We thank God for His mercy and grace that unites people of all colors and ethnic backgrounds. You should have seen us—we looked just like Jesus!

— Rev. Dan DeVeney, Pastor,
Northgate Brethren Church

To spank or not to spank?

Colorado Springs, Colo. — Guidelines for disciplining children released recently by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) are grounded in soft science and political correctness—not solid evidence, according to Focus on the Family.

The AAP recommended that parents be discouraged from using spanking as a method of discipline. AAP recommendations serve as guides for physicians and are often quoted, cited, and referenced as fact.

"With this statement, the AAP pulled the rug out from underneath parents by bashing the use of spanking and offering few options," said Dr. Den Trumbull, associated with Focus on the Family through the Alabama Physicians Resource Council and a member of the AAP. "Only the time-out and disapproval are offered as alternatives to spanking young children, and for many youngsters this is simply insufficient."

"In producing this policy statement, the AAP largely ignored the conclusions from two recent conferences of child developmental ex-

perts on corporal punishment, as well as established research on the issue. Political correctness and ideology drove the AAP to prematurely condemn spanking in these published guidelines. In their quest to curb parental options, they have preempted future research studies, and that is highly irresponsible," said Trumbull.

Focus on the Family supports the appropriate use of spanking as one method to help parents discipline children between the ages of two and ten. According to the *Complete Book of Baby and Child Care*, published by the Focus on the Family Physician Resource Council, "... spanking is a tool that can be useful in specific circumstances. However, some voices in our culture condemn all spanking based on claims that it teaches violence, perpetuates abuse, damages a child's dignity and doesn't change behavior. These criticisms are valid for abusive forms of corporal punishment. . . . But when utilized with appropriate guidelines, spanking can and should be neither abusive nor damaging to a child's physical or emotional well-being. [✝]



In Memory

John W. Porte, 82, a lifelong member and deacon of the South Bend, Ind., First Brethren Church, died March 14. From 1959 to 1967, Mr. Porte served in Ashland, Ohio, as Field Secretary for The Brethren Church.



John W. Porte

A Brethren pastor's son, he was born April 16, 1915, in Brighton, Ind., to Rev. Robert and Grace Guthrie Porte. He attended Ashland College and graduated from the Indiana School of Mortuary Science.

In 1939 he joined the South Bend Police Department, retiring in 1959 as chief of the detective bureau. Following his years of service for the Brethren denomination, he returned to South Bend and worked in the St. Joseph County Adult Probation Office, retiring in 1983 as chief probation officer.

On January 8, 1938, he married Eleanor Sholly, who survives. He is also survived by their four children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

His funeral service was held at the South Bend First Brethren Church, with Pastor Larry Baker officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the church or to the American Cancer Society. [†]

Christian news program being aired in Russia

Virginia Beach, Va. — Would you believe, a Christian news program on television in Russia? Well believe it, because it's happening!

Christian World News, a weekly news segment produced by Chris-

Masontown, Pa., Brethren Church is hosting Bible Released Time for elementary students

Masontown, Pa. — The Masontown Brethren Church has joined hands with Child Evangelism Fellowship of Fayette County and Children's Bible Ministries of South Western Pennsylvania to host Bible Released Time for Masontown elementary students.

Currently 33 students from the 3rd and 4th grades go to the church building once a week for an hour of learning Bible stories, Christian songs, and memory verses. The church is located just 1½ blocks from the school. The class meets on Tuesdays from 1:50 to 2:50 p.m. Plans are to add the 5th grade to the program next year.

Sherry Murray, Child Evangelism Fellowship Director for Fayette County, teaches the class. Judy Virgilli of Children's Bible Ministries has been a major organizer for the program. Also helping are Rev. Curt Nies, pastor of the Masontown Brethren Church, as well as five volunteers from the congregation.

Pennsylvania state law allows students to be released from school for a total of 36 hours per year for religious education. Parental permission slips are required in order for

students to attend. Any Brethren church interested is hosting a program may contact Rev. Curt Nies.

— reported by Pastor Curt Nies



Helping with the Bible Released Time program are (front, l. to r.) Don Lilley, vol.; Pastor Curt Nies; (back, l. to r.) Sherry Murray, teacher; Ed Harvey, vol.; Kelley Chahl, co-ordinator; and Janet Burge, secretary.

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tian Broadcasting Network in cooperation with Regent University, has partnered with International Russian Radio and TV to launch a new international version in Russian. The first Russian segment of *Christian World News* aired on 230 channels across the Commonwealth of Independent States at the end of 1997. [†]

The Brethren Evangelist

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A newsletter for Brethren people

May 1998

Visualize Renewal — In Your Life

By Emanuel W. Sandberg

MOST OF US want to change things (or at least something) in our lives. As I wrote in the January EVANGELIST, "The Brethren Church is in real need of renewal." I include myself as among those sharing that need. I want each one of us to have a close, personal relationship with God. In fact, I believe we need a visit from God!

A life-changing Conference

I believe our General Conference this summer will bring Brethren believers into a new relationship with God's Spirit. The Conference is being planned as a Brethren celebration of God's power to revive, restore, and redirect His people. I want you to come and participate in this celebration. I believe that if you do, your life will never be the same.

The general theme of the Conference will be "Visualize Renewal." Each day of the week-long celebration will focus on a specific relationship we want to change:

Monday—Renew Our Heart

Tuesday—Renew Our Family Relationships

Wednesday—Renew Our Spirit

Thursday—Renew Our Heart for the Lost

Friday—Renew Our Church

The worship sessions will set the stage for great messages of inspiration. The speakers will move our hearts and minds, as we consider our own lives, including the vision we have of the future.

• Dr. Terry Wardle, new to the Ashland Theological Seminary faculty, with years of experience in Christian renewal and restoration, will tell us how God can renew our hearts.

• Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, founder and president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, will speak to us about family and husband/wife relationships and lead workshops for families and men.

• Dr. Richard Parrott, who heads up the doctoral studies program at Ashland Theological Seminary, will help us see how God can renew our spirits.

• Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief Corporation and a gifted communicator, will help us see the need for our mission and relief services throughout the world and how we can Renew our Heart for the Lost—those who do not yet know Jesus.

• David West, Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church, will share his insights with regard to the potential of a renewed Brethren Church.

An event to talk about

The music, the worship sessions, the prayers, the workshops, the messages will blend together in a celebration of Christian love, challenge, and renewal, which I believe will change the mind and heart of everyone who attends. You will not **want** to Go home—but when you do, you will go home a different person.

I am excited! I believe we are going to have an experience at the 1998 General Conference that will renew lives. It will be an event we will talk about for years to come.

Therefore, I urge you to come. Bring your children, including those

who have moved away from home. And bring families that have moved away from the church. Get the new families in your church to come. Urge anybody who wants to revive, renew, and restore his or her life to join the celebration at our 1998 Conference.

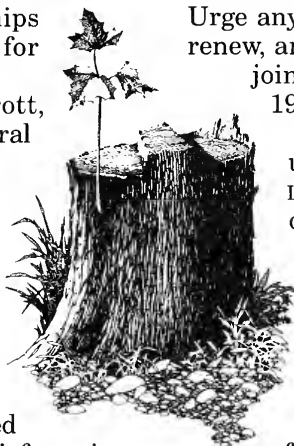
In the article in the January issue of the EVANGELIST that I referred to previously, I said, "Renewal comes from God's intervention, not from man's good works." We can, however, be agents of God's will and facilitators of God's action. This year's Conference is being organized with those facts in mind. This celebration will revive, renew, and restore our lives, with God's help. The important thing is that God has been invited to attend our 1998 General Conference, and He has been invited **to participate!**

The door is open for each one of us. Visualize what renewal would mean in your life—and come to our 1998 Conference to get it started! [✠]

Dr. "Buzz" Sandberg is Executive Director of The Brethren Church.

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Thoughts on Renewal

By Robert Stafford

The following article by Rev. Stafford was received in response to earlier articles in the *EVANGELIST* about renewal. Rev. Stafford served as a Brethren pastor until 1993, when cancer forced him to retire. He now ministers to people over the internet, and is "Cyber-Pastor" to people around the world. (See "From Seeking Help to Sharing Hope" on page 6 of the January 1998 *EVANGELIST*.)

I AM EXCITED about renewal being the theme for The Brethren Church. I've gone by many church buildings with signs out front proclaiming that there would be "renewal" during a certain week. I often wondered how they managed to trap the Holy Spirit into a time schedule to fit their calendar. Renewal is something that must take place continually within followers of Jesus Christ.

But I wonder if we really understand what is necessary in order for renewal to begin within our individual lives. It cannot be mere rhetoric; it requires true understanding and transformation within the believer. We profess many things with our mouths that we don't practice in our daily lives. We talk about loving others, but I wonder if most of us really do. Do we really love the unsaved? Do we have true compassion for them in their lostness?

Recently I received a letter from a friend in Arizona. Her oldest son will be released from prison next month, and her youngest son will enter that institution at the same

time. But her biggest complaint is that her church "friends" don't spend time with her. She knows that she needs what they have, but according to her, they aren't willing to share it with her.

The truth of the matter is that we probably don't love a lot of people the way we should. A number of years ago I picked up a refrigerator magnet that spoke volumes of truth in one sentence. It was a picture of a fat cat on a purple background. It said, "God loves you! And I'm trying." If we were truly honest with ourselves, we'd have to confess that this is true of us.

Forgiving and forgetting

I question many things. In fact, I've often gotten myself into trouble by questioning things. One thing I question is the statement, "God forgives and God forgets." Think about this for a minute. **IF** God can forget, then He doesn't know everything and He's **not** omniscient (all knowing). I searched the Scriptures to see if they said anywhere that God forgives and forgets. I couldn't find it. I did find a couple of verses that say something similar.

"No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:34, NIV

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Hebrews 8:12, NIV

Scripture doesn't say that God "forgets"; it says that He will "remember no more." Forgiveness is an act of the will. What the Bible says is that God will forgive our wickedness and not bring it up again. This is not because God has forgotten our sins, but because we are in a different relationship with Him because

of His forgiveness. He chooses not to bring up the past. Jesus never brings up the past sins or failures of those who come to Him for forgiveness. By an act of His will, by an act of grace, He overlooks them.

But I have a hard time forgetting when people have done me wrong. Many years ago, in my first pastorate, the treasurer and I didn't get along very well. Then one day he came to the parsonage and asked me to forgive him for all that we had gone through. Of course, you have to forgive someone if they ask you to, don't you? But the next time we met, I found myself in wild emotions. I realized that through an act of our wills, we were in a different relationship. I now had to treat him differently and with a lot more compassion than before.

I think that one of the things holding us back is the past—our own past and the past of others with whom we have come into contact. Most of our churches are small, and we know most of the people who live around us. Some of us have been "burned" by those in our communities. What I'm afraid of is that we don't really care if those who have hurt us are going to hell. We've lost any sense of grace toward them. We've forgotten how much we are to forgive because of the One who has forgiven us.

Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it in the presence of human failure and sin.

Lewis Sperry Chafer

Renewal will come only when three things happen in individuals within the church. We must see God as He really is. We must see ourselves as God sees us. And we must see the world as God sees it. Only when these three things happen will there be genuine renewal within our world. [†]

I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other, and that the taller we grew in Christian character, the more easily we could reach them. I now find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other, and that it is not a question of growing taller but of stooping lower.

— F. B. Meyer

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Upon This Rock

By Dan Lawson

A WELL-KNOWN INSURANCE company urges people to "Get a piece of the rock." A rock is the company's emblem. It symbolizes strength and security. People in the company's commercials are often asked if they own a piece of the rock.

Matthew 16 records an occasion when Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. Simon replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Jesus told Simon that he was blessed, and then He gave Simon that name which has since become a legend, the name "Peter" (Matt. 16:18).

Just a little rock

A close investigation of this passage gives us unique insights into our individual roles in God's kingdom. Verse 18 records that Jesus told Simon that he is "Petros." And then Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." In speaking to Simon, Jesus actually used two slight variations on the same word. He calls Simon "Petros" (Peter), which literally means "little rock." Then He says, "Upon this 'petra' [meaning big rock or many rocks] I will build my church."

This was no slip of the tongue by our Lord and Master. Jesus was very deliberate in what He said. Peter's confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God was just one of millions that would follow. This is why Jesus said that Peter was a little rock—one of many rocks or a little piece of the big rock—upon which He would build His church.

If this interpretation is correct, then Jesus was not making Peter the first bishop of the church. Nor was He conferring any special title on Peter. In fact, I think the name

Peter just happened to be a nickname that stuck with Simon after this conversation.

What Jesus was actually doing here was teaching all of us how He would build His kingdom. He

"I firmly believe there is someone you know who may not go to heaven if you do not tell that person about Jesus. Your confession of faith is the very thing that person needs to help him or her become part of the church that Christ is building."

builds that kingdom not on any particular person, but with each believer's confession of faith. That includes you and me. Jesus said that He would build His church upon the confession of faith that each of us makes in Him as Christ. And He still continues to do this.

What this comes down to is that Jesus is building a little piece of His church upon you. Without your confession of faith, He has no foundation, no basis, no rock upon which He can build His church. Your confession of faith in Jesus is the vital building block that Jesus is using today to make His church strong. If you fail to confess Him, you leave a hole in His church big enough for the enemy to walk through.

Many rocks make a wall

While on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, I had the opportunity to help lay stones for a wall of a house. Laying a stone wall is not difficult. The secret is

simple: many stones make a wall. In fact, I discovered that in building a wall, little stones are just as important as big ones. When we look at a stone wall, we notice the big stones. But the truth is that the big stones would not stay in place without the little ones. The little stones help prop up the big stones. They hold the big stones in place and fill in the gaps that the big rocks leave.

The same is true of the church that Christ is building. Each one of us, by our confession of faith in Christ, is a stone that He uses. Without your stone, the wall just might fall down. If you withhold your stone, you not only leave a hole in the wall big enough for the enemy to walk through, but you let someone else down.

Without your stone, someone else may not become part of Christ's church. I firmly believe there is someone you know who may not go to heaven if you do not tell that person about Jesus. Your confession of faith is the very thing that person needs to help him or her become part of the church that Christ is building.

The gates of hell

The gates of hell swing open wide to accommodate the souls of the damned. Picture in your mind those huge, foreboding gates reaching out like great arms that sweep the souls of the lost into hell. Now picture in your mind a huge stone wall built across the opening of hell, pinning the gates shut and not allowing them to swing open.

Jesus says in Matthew 16:18 that this is exactly what He is doing with your confession of faith. You are a stone in His wall, a wall that will forever seal the gates of hell shut. I don't know about you, but I'd rather be a little rock in that wall than a boulder anywhere else! [†]

Dr. Lawson is pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Indiana. This is part of a series of articles by Dr. Lawson in which he applies Bible truth to our personal lives.

The Call of God Leading Us to Phoenix

By Rev James Miller

GOD HAS CALLED US to plant a church in Phoenix, Arizona, in order to reach the lost for Christ. I don't know any other way to say it.

Let me tell you how this came about. My wife, Ann, and I love to tell this story, and we would love to tell it to you in person. I hope this account will do justice to the way God has worked this out.

Ann and I have felt rather unsettled for some time, not quite sure what God wanted us to do. Church planting was always a possibility, but I did not feel any clear call to that. And Ann was ready for a rest (floating in an inner tube in a mountain lake, she says!).

But everything changed last August at General Conference. One of the speakers, Rev. Hal Seed from New Song Community Church in San Diego, Calif., told how God had broken his heart for lost people, and how New Song Church was started in order to reach those lost people. The whole time he was talking, I kept thinking, "Man, this is what I have always wanted to do. This is the kind of church I have always wanted to be involved in!" God was reigniting a call to church planting that I had felt way back in 1978. The next night Ann and I committed ourselves to pursuing this kind of ministry.

But where?

The next question was, "Where?" Where did God want us to plant a church. Over the next six weeks, we prayed about several possibilities, some of which were very appealing. But God closed the door on all of them! On Sunday morning, September 25, feeling a bit frustrated by this turn of events, I asked God to show us where He wanted us to go. I told Him that we were willing to go anywhere.

Well, God didn't waste any time.

Later that same day, John Crowe, a friend from Phoenix, showed up on our doorstep. He began telling me how he and his wife were at a cross-



Rev. Jim and Ann Miller with their children: (l. to r.) Bryan (14), David (11), Jim, Luke (9), Ann, and Annie (7). For the past 14 years Rev. Miller has served as pastor of the Carmel, Indiana, Brethren Church.

roads in their lives with regard to their church and with regard to the direction God was leading them.

The whole time John is telling me his story, the Spirit is nudging me to tell him ours. So I did, telling him about our call to church planting. Then I said, "John, I don't believe in coincidence. Could God have put you on my couch tonight because He wants us to consider planting a church together?"

"Wow, that's wild!" John replied. Then he began to talk about all the possibilities. We prayed about what God might do, and then John left.

Several days later, I e-mailed John and asked him to continue praying. I told him that I was convinced that he had been in my living room for a reason, even if it was not in order to help plant a church. He e-mailed me back a couple of days later to say, "Let's do it! We're on board! What do you want to do? Where do you want to do it? What's the next step?"

I found myself praying about the possibility of planting a church in Phoenix, a place that wasn't on the Brethren list of potential church

plants—and certainly not on mine. It was too far away! But when John left that Sunday night, I had turned to Ann and said, "You know, I wouldn't be surprised if we ended up in Phoenix."

At the end of October, Brethren Missionary Ministries sent us to Dynamic Church Planting International in San Diego to be assessed and trained as church planters. Two days after we got home, we contacted Glenn and Sarah Black at the Nappanee, Indiana, First Brethren Church to ask them to consider coming with us as full-time staff members of this new church. We told them we were considering Phoenix as a location.

"Wow, that's interesting!" Glenn replied. "Sarah and I have been praying for the last year about church planting, and we've been specifically praying about the southwest and Phoenix."

More confirmation

So now God is beginning to push us to the southwest. But I must have been pretty dense, because more confirmation was still to come.

Ann and I flew out to Phoenix in November, seeking God's final confirmation. We were asking God for several different things (for example, scriptural confirmation and denominational approval) so that we could be assured of His will. Neon lights flashing a message from God would have been good! But He did something even more special.

We ate dinner at the home of Tom and Jenny Grumbling, friends of ours who live in the East Valley of Phoenix. Tom told us that his brother Wayne, knowing that we were considering church planting in Phoenix, had called Tom and asked him if he would be interested in helping with a new work there. Tom said he had told his brother that he wasn't really interested in doing that—unless God sent someone like Jim Miller to start the work!

Isn't God good? And since that, He's done other things to confirm His call—like having people call us and say, "We hear you're going to

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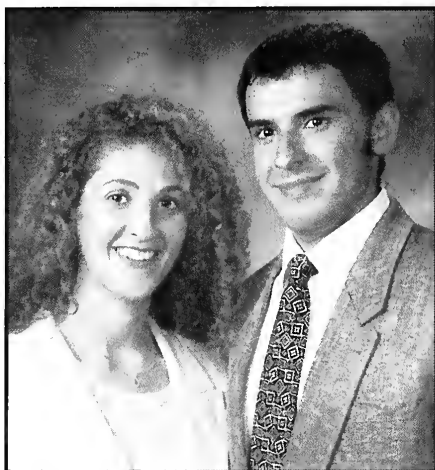
Argentine Brethren celebrate launch of South American Theological Seminary

By Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez

ON MARCH 15, 1998, at the "Sanctuary of Faith" (the Brethren church) in Colón, Argentina, a gathering was held to celebrate the launching of the South American Theological Seminary as an academic institution at the national level and to celebrate the inauguration of the 1998 schedule of classes of the seminary.

Present for the celebration were members of the various national committees of The Brethren Church of Argentina. Also in attendance were groups of students, approximately 70 in all, representing each local church that will function as a center of studies for the South American Theological Seminary. The entire congregation rejoiced with these students, who, for the next three years, will be dedicated to their academic and spiritual preparation in order to serve God and The Brethren Church.

It was truly a time of celebration for the people of God. The overall theme for the evening was "Praise God for His Faithfulness." The occasion was an answer to the prayers of many brothers and sisters in The



Mariela and Eduardo Rodriguez

Brethren Church of Argentina, who have desired for some time an academic program that would suit the needs of our churches.

Each group of students had an opportunity to say a few words. One student expressed better than anyone else the benefit of this program of studies. She said, "For the first time, being such a numerous group of students, we are going to be united not only in Spirit, but also in the reflection on and study of the Word

through an academic program in common."

The first trimester of classes has already begun, with excellent comments and responses from the students. In all, 140 students filled out the entrance application! The challenge now before us is for Brethren Missionary Ministries, The Brethren Church in the United States, Ashland Theological Seminary, The Brethren Church of Argentina, the Board of Trustees of South American Theological Seminary, and the directors to continue working together to support financially the many who can continue studying only if they obtain scholarships.

We cannot thank enough those who participated in that glorious evening at the 1997 General Conference in South Bend, Indiana. On that occasion Dr. Finks challenged us to achieve something difficult to believe—an offering of \$20,000 to help fund a theological seminary in Argentina. We all know the results: that figure was reached and even surpassed. Even now, many people continue to participate by contributing to the project.

The realization of a dream

Today, with much happiness, we can say that we are beginning to see realized what was only a dream in August 1997. The words of Paul to the Corinthians can be ours for you: "[We] had confidence in all of you, that you would all share [our] joy" (2Cor. 2:3b).

May this article go out as an expression of gratitude to the Lord and to all of the brothers and sisters who have made possible the birth of the South American Theological Seminary. [†]

Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez are the directors of the South American Theological Seminary.

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Phoenix to plant a church. Can we come along?"

That's why I'm writing this article. I believe that God is calling people to join the leadership team that will plant a church to reach lost people in Phoenix. Thirteen people have already committed themselves to serve on our core team. Twenty to twenty-five others are praying about the possibility. We believe there are others whom God is calling to Phoenix to help plant this church, others who have the same vision, the same heart to reach the lost that we have. It could be you!

If you sense God's call to this work, or if you would like more information to help you make your decision, you can obtain an information packet and a core application form by calling me at 317-848-7211, or by e-mailing us at JimMAnnM@aol.com.

After we shared this story with a couple here in Indianapolis, the husband said, "Man, are you ready for what God is preparing to do there?"

Whatever He does, He's now paving the way for a vital work that will impact lost people for His kingdom. If He's calling you, we want you to be a part of it. [†]

Summer Ministries and The Brethren Church

By David L. West

MANY PEOPLE WONDER where the youth of today are heading. While I cannot speak for all the young people in America, I can tell you where some of our Brethren young people will be spending part of their summer.

This is a new day in our summer short-term missions program. We are going to some new places as well as some familiar ones. For the fifth consecutive year a team will serve in Juarez, Mexico, where Brethren having been making a difference for the past four years.

The *new* for this year comes in the form of an inner-city mission work in Memphis, Tenn., where we will partner with New Song Baptist Church in touching the lives of underprivileged neighborhood kids. We also will be making a historic first trip overseas to the island of Jamaica. On this trip we will be working with Christian Service International of Muncie, Indiana. Also this year we have a number of adults answering the call to short-term mission service. They will serve not only as team leaders and chaperones, but also as team members.

In addition to the mission trips, we will also have Crusaders active in three districts, and two participants in the Young Adult Intern program.

At this point I want to thank the churches for your substantial response to the request for Prayer Warriors. Many people have signed up to pray for these teams as they serve God and the people He loves—the lost.

MISSION TEAMS

Memphis, Tennessee
June 20-27

Brad Whitehead, associate pastor of the Goshen, Ind., First Brethren Church, will lead this team to Mem-

phis. The team will partner with a small inner-city Baptist church in leading Backyard Bible Clubs twice a day for one week.

Team members are Sarah Davis, Elizabeth Esch, Tony Paul, Adam Garner, Jesse Davis, Jeff Estep, and Jason Bryant. All are from the First Brethren Church of Elkhart, Ind. Don and Laura Fisk, adults from Elkhart First Brethren, will assist Pastor Brad and the team.

This mission outreach will touch the lives of young people that live in a drastically different social and economical environment. The team is expecting big things from this trip, both for themselves and for those to whom they will minister.

Elizabeth Esch put it this way: *I hope to at least reach out and touch one person, and, through God's help, put a spark inside their heart to let them know that He loves them and that He wants a personal relationship with them.* Elizabeth's reliance on God's strength is evident throughout the entire team. As another team-member declared: *With God I can do anything.*

This mission trip will provide a two-fold learning experience as the team members work together to reach predominately unchurched kids with the Gospel, and as they partner with a church body different from theirs for the sake of the kingdom. Adam Garner's hope for this experience embodies the nature of the Memphis trip. His hope is that this trip will *help me . . . become an out-of-state disciple.* It will be life-changing!

Jamaica
July 6-21

Tony Price and his wife Geneva will be leading a historic first "overseas" mission trip for Summer Ministries. Tony is Youth Pastor at Trinity Brethren Church in Canton,

Ohio. Members of this group will work with Christian Service International, headquartered in Muncie, Ind., as they spend sixteen days on the island of Jamaica.

Those taking this exciting missions trip will make up two teams, a Vacation Bible School Team and a Music Evangelism Team. The VBS Team is comprised of five members: Sara Naylor from Trinity Brethren Church of Canton, Ohio; Jeanna Osborn and Tiffany Roark from the Brookville, Ohio, Grace Brethren Church; and Mandi Huff and Benjamin Pippen from the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church. This Team will lead Bible studies and help with crafts, music, and recreation.

The Music Evangelism Team will be part of a choir that will present open-air concerts and minister in orphanages and a prison. Team members include Tony and Geneva Price; Rev. Gene and Deann Oburn from Loree First Brethren Church, Bunker Hill, Ind.; and Patsy LeMaster and Ernie and Dolly Zerbe, also from the Loree Church.

The commitment and enthusiasm of this group of servants is easily caught as you listen to some of their hopes. *I need to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others in order to grow as a Christian* (Sara Naylor). Ben Pippen sees this trip as *my next step in my walk with Christ.* They desire to *give their all to God in Jamaica* (Tiffany Roark) in order that *Christ's Kingdom will grow larger* (Mandi Huff).

Juarez, Mexico
July 25-August 1

This will be the fifth consecutive summer that we have sent a team to minister in Juarez, Mexico. The team this year will be led by Ed Strickland of the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio.

Team members at the present are Lindsay Gravatt from the Mt. Olive Brethren Church (McGaheysville, Va.), and Sarah Austin and Nick Frank, both from the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland. Other team members may still be added.

DISTRICT CRUSADERS

Ohio District

One team will serve the Ohio District this summer. Emily Weidenhamer and Tim Hess, both from Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, will join with Kevin Gibson from the Louisville, Ohio, Brethren Bible Church to make up the team.

They will serve at the Ohio Junior High Camp and also help with projects at Louisville Brethren Bible Church, Trinity Brethren Church in Canton, and Greta Brethren Church near Bellefontaine.

Pennsylvania District

Two crusader teams will serve the Pennsylvania District this summer.

Team 1 will help with vacation Bible schools at the Valley (Jones Mills, Pa.), Fairless Hills-Levittown, and Berlin Brethren Churches. Team members are Tiffany Neiderhiser from Valley (Jones Mills), Melanie Johns from Brush Valley (Adrian, Pa.), and Bryan Baker from Berlin.

Team 2 will be serving the Johnstown Third, Wayne Heights (Waynesboro, Pa.), and Raystown (Saxton, Pa.) Brethren Churches. Team members are Melissa Shaffer from Valley, Carrie Lingenfelter from Brush Valley, and David Schrecengost, Jr., from Pleasant View (Vandergrift).

Southeastern District

Two teams will also serve the Southeastern District this summer.

Team 1: Chris Pennington from the Oak Hill, W. Va., Church, Emily Bowers from St. James, and Megan Wetzel from Waterbrook (Edinburg, Va.) will make up this team. They will serve at the Southeastern Junior Camp and will help with vacation Bible schools at Gateway Brethren Fellowship in Hagerstown, Md., and at the St. James Brethren Church.

Team 2: Serving at the Southeastern Middler Camp will be Rachel Munson from St. James, Nichol Clark from Waterbrook (Edinburg, Va.), and April Watkins from Oak Hill. This team will also help out at the Hagerstown First and St. James Brethren Churches.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY INTERNS

RACHEL PENNINGTON

Rachel is a member of the Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church and an Ashland University student. This year Rachel will take on the challenging task of serving four churches in the Southeastern Dis-

trict—Mt. Olive (McGaheysville, Va.), Gateway (Hagerstown, Md.), St. James (Md.), and Grace Community (Winchester, Va.). In addition to her duties at these churches, she will serve at the Junior High, Middler, and Senior High camps at Shepherd's Springs.

AARON HOLLEWELL

Aaron, an Ashland University student from the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church, will be returning to his home district to serve in the Cerro Gordo, Ill., Brethren Church. He will assist Rev. Henry Wilson, pastor of the congregation. Aaron will be working specifically in the area of youth ministries. [†]

Brethren World Assembly to be held July 15–18, 1998

"Faith and Family — Challenges and Commitments" will be the theme of the second Brethren World Assembly planned for July 15–18, 1998, at Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, Va.). A Brethren World Assembly is an opportunity for Brethren from all the groups with roots in the Brethren movement that began in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708 to come together for a time of study and fellowship.

The Assembly will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15, and conclude with lunch on Saturday, July 18. Study papers will be presented on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday, with Dr. Brenda Colijn and Dr. John Shultz from The Brethren Church among the presenters. At a banquet on Wednesday night, Carl Bowman will give the keynote speech, "A Sociological Study of the Impact of Modern Culture on the Brethren Family." Thursday night a worship service in the new Bridgewater Church of the Brethren will focus on Brethren family life in other parts of the world.

Friday morning panel discussions will be held on men's and women's roles in the Brethren groups. That afternoon, a tour of historic sites in the Linville Creek area will be conducted. A worship service Friday evening will be held in Cole Hall on the Bridgewater College campus.

On Saturday morning, several workshops will be conducted, including Plain Dress, Home Schooling, Brethren Way of Christ, and The Quiet Place. The Assembly will then conclude with worship at 11:30 a.m. in Cole Hall.

Anyone is welcome to attend the Assembly. Registration costs are \$50 per person and \$25 for an accompanying spouse. Single-day registration is \$20; Wednesday evening banquet only is \$10. Those attending only the Thursday or Friday night worship services will not be asked to pay a registration fee, but will have the opportunity to contribute to a free-will offering.

Accommodations will be available in air-conditioned rooms in college residence halls; meals in the Kline Campus Center. Room and board packages are available that include three nights lodging, meals from Wednesday noon through Saturday noon, and the tour on Friday afternoon. The package rates are \$109 per person for a double-occupancy room; \$149 for single-occupancy. Single-day rates are \$31 for double-occupancy; \$46 for single-occupancy.

Brochures with more details and a registration form will be sent to Brethren pastors and church moderators in the next *Leadership Letter* (at the end of May). If you would like to attend the Assembly, ask your pastor or moderator for a copy of the brochure, or contact the Brethren Church National Office at 419-289-1708. [†]

Are Your Finances Out of Control?

By Loma G. Davies Silcott

FOR MOST AMERICANS, credit is a way of life. Unfortunately, if you do not plan your spending well, you can be in **big** trouble when the bills start coming due. Below are ten questions that can help you determine whether you are heading for financial problems.

Danger signs!

1. Do you pay only the minimum amount due on credit card bills each month?
2. Is each month's credit card balance higher than the previous month's?
3. Do you pay bills late or miss payments completely?
4. Do you frequently use bank account overdraft privileges or bank draft advances?
5. Do you use credit to pay routine bills?
6. Do you deplete your savings for routine items or have no savings at all?
7. Are you so far behind on your bills that you receive dunning letters from your creditors?
8. Do you avoid talking to your spouse about money? Or is that *all* you talk about?
9. Do you depend on overtime pay, bonus checks, or moonlighting to cover regular expenses?
10. Do you take out new loans to pay off old ones?

If you answered *yes* to even one of these questions, you are starting to experience financial problems. If you answered *yes* to two or three of them, you are in serious financial trouble. If you answered *yes* to more than three, you need to take a long, hard look at your financial situation and possibly seek professional financial counseling. But be assured:

while your situation is difficult, it is not hopeless.

Steps to recovery

Here are six steps to help you get your finances under control:

1. Put God first in your finances, both in your giving and in how you use the rest of your money.
2. Make a budget. A budget is a *must* for good financial management. If you are married, sit down with your spouse and work out a budget you can both live with. If you don't agree on it, it won't work.
3. If you consistently pay only the minimum amount due on your credit card bill each month and each month the amount you owe gets larger, stop and reevaluate your credit card purchases. You should strongly consider destroying the cards so you won't be



tempted to add to your bill. Learn to do without things until you can afford them.

4. If you must juggle or skip payments, sit down and re-figure your budget. Cut out anything you can live without. If you still do not have enough money to make the payments, write to your creditors and explain your

situation. Ask if they will accept less per month temporarily. Often a professional financial planner can be a real help here.

5. Frequently using overdraft privileges on checking accounts or bank draft advances falls into the same category as misusing your credit card. You may find you must simply close this kind of account and open one that does not offer these privileges.
6. As soon as possible, start a savings account. Try to put something aside, even if it is only \$5.00 a month. You need to get into the savings habit. Keep this money as a cushion for *real* emergencies, and, as it accumulates, for future major purchases.

If you have not encountered any of the ten financial situations listed at the beginning of this article, then praise God! But also plan ahead so that you don't! Set up both a short-range budget and a long-range financial plan, and stick to them.

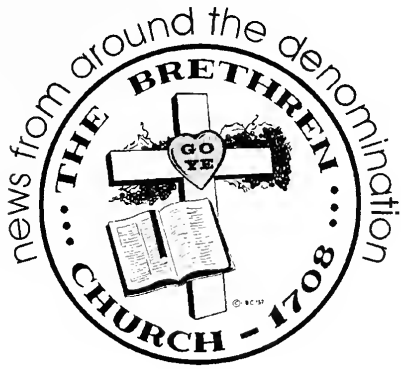
As Christians, we are admonished to be good stewards of the money God has entrusted to us. Good stewardship concerns not just our giving, but handling all our money in such a way that we have a good testimony before others. Anything we do that discredits us, discredits our Lord.

Put God first

So put God first in all that you do, including your finances. He has promised in Malachi 3:10 to bless those who honor Him with their material possessions.

If you are already in financial trouble, follow the six suggestions given above to work your way out. It may be a long, slow, painful process, but the end result will be worth it. You can again be in charge of your finances. You will regain your self-respect and the respect of your creditors. You will have a clear conscience before God and others. And you can again be a *real* testimony for Him. [†]

Mrs. Silcott is a free-lance writer. She lives in Rapid City, South Dakota.



Missions made personal at Indiana District men's retreat

Shipshewana, Ind. — "A Call to Missions — Not For Me!?" was the theme of the second annual Indiana District Men's Fellowship Retreat, held April 17-18 at the Brethren Retreat Center. The purpose of the retreat was to ignite a burning passion among the men for sharing their faith.

Thirty-six men attended the retreat—not a large number, but twice as many as attended the first retreat in 1997. They enjoyed a great keynote address by Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church; a hearty snack of brownies and ice cream; an exhausting round of basketball; three flavorful feasts; and several challenging seminars.

They were also asked to consider whether they are involved in the Great Commission (as presented in Matthew 28:18-20) or the Great Omission (omitting the call of missions from their lives). The challenge put before them was to develop a burden for the lost and to allow God to give them a passion to serve Him. This could be overseas, in another state or city, at work, across the backyard fence, or even under their own roof.

— reported by Rick Miller,
Director, Brethren
Retreat Center

New Brethren church in Vista, Calif., holds "sneak preview" service on Easter Sunday

Vista, Calif. — The Rock Springs Community Church held a "sneak preview" service on Easter Sunday, and 105 people attended. The attendance exceeded the expectations of church planter Jim Boyd, who was praying for 75 people to come!

The Grand Opening for this new Brethren church is not scheduled until October 4, 1998. Pastor Boyd is still in the process of raising the necessary funding and of growing and training a core group.

The purpose of the preview service was twofold: (1) to build excitement in the community and momentum for the Grand Opening in the fall; and (2) to provide a training opportunity for the core group.

The service included a number of contemporary songs led by the group's band; an "Intro Talk" de-

signed to introduce the theme for the morning; a drama portraying Mary Magdalene immediately after the crucifixion; and a straightforward gospel presentation by Pastor Boyd.

Following the service, the core group hosted a barbeque and "mega" Easter egg hunt. Here, too, the response exceeded expectations, with the majority of guests staying for both events. This gave the core group an opportunity to build relationships with the guests.

Prior to the preview service, 5,000 fliers announcing the service were mailed, and another 750 were handed out. An estimated 25-30% of the guests came as a result of the flyers, with the remaining 70-75% coming as a result of personal invitations by members of the core group. [†]

N. Georgetown Church facility transformed for Mission Fair

North Georgetown, Ohio — The Sunday school classrooms and fellowship hall of the North Georgetown First Brethren Church underwent a major transformation recently, when they became countries for the church's Mission Fair.

All the rooms were decorated with great creativity and color in accordance with the country they represented. There was even music of the country represented.

The fellowship hall was the "international food court," where samples of food from the featured countries were available. There were sopapillas, tacos, Masala Bhat, hot dogs (guess which country they represented!), and many more. All were very tasty!

"Tour guides" led "tourists" to the various countries. As they traveled, the tourists saw artifacts from each land, learned about Brethren missionaries serving there, and were informed of some of the difficulties and needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ in those nations.

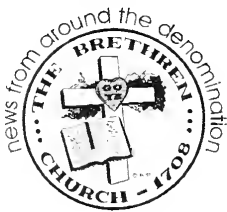
A total of 134 people attended the Mission Fair, a large number for a small community. According to Diane Sanor, who reported this event for the EVANGELIST, the fair was "a great success!"

"I urge all the Brethren churches to have something like a Mission Fair," Mrs. Sanor said. "It's fun, and you learn a lot about our Brethren missions."

"We want to express a great big thank you to Ashland for sending all the pictures and items and for answering all our questions," Mrs. Sanor added. "Without their help, our fair wouldn't have been nearly so great." [†]



In "Malaysia," wearing hats they made themselves, are (l. to r.) Shanda Clemens, Courtney Lockard (foreground), Nathan Diehl, Abbey Latham, and Katelyn Carson.



Brethren in Nigeria, W. Africa, celebrate 75th anniversary

Nigeria, West Africa — Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) celebrated its 75th anniversary on March 17, 1998. The celebration was held in Garkida, Nigeria, near the same tamarind tree where, 75 years earlier, missionaries Stover Kulp and Albert Holser held the first Brethren worship service in Nigeria.

A crowd estimated at more than 5,000 attended the celebration. It included 42 representatives from the Church of the Brethren, 31 of whom had come as part of a tour group especially for the anniversary celebration. A number of former missionaries or their children were present.

The day was filled with singing, prayer, recognition of special guests, speeches on the development of the church, and fellowship. There were also performances of traditional music, dancing, and drumming, and displays of costumes representing the many tribes that are a part of the church. It was a time of thanksgiving for past blessings on the church and of praying for God's guidance in the future.

From its small beginnings in 1923, the church has grown to more than 300 congregations with a total membership of 140,000 and Sunday worship attendances of 240,000. It is one of the fastest-growing Christian denominations in Africa. Building on the foundation laid by the missionaries, the church takes a holistic approach to ministry, with programs in rural development, health, and education, in addition to traditional church programs.

From 1948 to 1976, missionaries from The Brethren Church worked with Church of the Brethren missionaries in Nigeria. The Brethren Church continued to send support funds for the work for several more years after 1976. [✝]



Adriana Ferreri (far r.) with the Sunday school children she teaches each week.

Brethren mission work in Colombia advancing under the direction of Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri

Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, made an administrative visit March 19-23 to Colombia, South America, where he visited with Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri, missionaries to Colombia from The Brethren Church in Argentina. He gives the following report of the work there.

Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri described what it is like to live in Medellín, Colombia. They live in the Ferrara barrio (suburb) of Medellín. They've been threatened. Twice they've heard gunfire in the immediate vicinity of their home. Once Marcelo was standing only a few yards from someone who was shot—while he was there! Colombians and missionaries serving in Colombia live in a very violent society.

On the other hand, life in Medellín is not all that different from life in other major cities around the world, including the U.S. And Medellín is a beautiful city. It enjoys perpetual springtime. The flora and fauna are gorgeous. The people are generally open and friendly. A few bad apples may not spoil the whole barrel, but they can give it a bad reputation.

The Brethren Church in Ferrara is growing. In January, Marcelo led the leaders of the church in a planning retreat. They developed a strategic plan for the next seven years, which includes property acquisition and building expansion to meet the needs of a growing church.

On Sunday, March 22, people were standing in the doorway of the church because there wasn't enough seating for everyone. It was not because I was there. Attendance is like that nearly every week!

Adriana supervises the children's Sunday school. She has 20 children enrolled every week. She is training several new teachers for all grades. Adriana also works with a growing women's ministry, which includes Bible study, prayer, and outreach. In addition, she leads the worship team, which does a great job.

Marcelo recently taught a Bible study called *Abundant Life* to 21 people. Following the course, many of the 21 received Christ as Lord and Savior. Marcelo baptized ten of them. Now he's planning to take the entire church through the course and train some new teachers. They will use the course for evangelistic Bible studies.

Marcelo is also teaching leadership classes at the Campo Valdes church in Medellín. Attendance is in the upper teens. He is developing a positive relationship with this congregation. He also helps them with their Compassion International ministry.

I am very excited about Marcelo and Adriana. They have accomplished in just nine months what I expected them to do in two or three years. Please pray for them. And be sure to meet them at General Conference. [✝]

Dr. David Reese sets forth case for creation versus evolution at pastors'/wives' retreat

Lake Geneva, Wis. — Approximately 40 Brethren pastors and other elders, most of them accompanied by their wives, enjoyed a time of worship, study, fellowship, and recreation at the annual Pastors' and Wives' Retreat, held April 28-30 at Interlaken Resort and Country Spa at Lake Geneva.

The speaker for the retreat was Dr. David Reese, a medical doctor with a family practice in Lanark, Ill. Dr. Reese, Jewish by birth, Christian by choice, and a member of the Lanark First Brethren Church, presented four lectures on the biblical account of creation versus the theory of evolution. In a fifth session he answered questions about the material he had presented.

A student of both Scripture and science, Dr. Reese believes that we are in a battle for the hearts and minds of our children. Our children (and many adults as well!) hear so often that evolution is fact (rather than theory) that they believe it without questioning it. Scientists have become our gods.

From his studies, Dr. Reese is convinced that the Scriptures are true and that what they say about creation can be trusted. He believes that the creation model explains the facts of our world much better than the evolution model. Some Christians have tried to have it both ways by saying that the Bible reveals why the world was made, while science reveals how. But he believes that the Bible reveals both how and why.

While scientists point out problems with the creationist view of our universe, Dr. Reese pointed out problems with an evolutionary view. He noted, for example, the many missing links in the fossil records, not only between man and lower forms of life, but all along the "evo-

lutionary chain." He pointed out that evolution violates the second law of thermodynamics, which says, in essence, that things fall apart

rather than becoming more complex. He showed that evolution's premise of the survival of the fittest is contradicted by the facts: harmful mutations should not accumulate in the population, but they do; organisms should not develop "suicidal" behaviors,

but they do. He also explained that even for the simplest building blocks of life to have developed from water and inorganic matter, if possible at all, would have taken a much greater length of time than even the 4½ billion years that scientists have posited for the whole evolutionary process on earth.

Dr. Reese believes that much of the "evidence" for evolution (fossils and the stratification of earth's upper crust) can be explained by the flood in Noah's day, which he believes was a much more cataclysmic event than most of us ever imagine. He also pointed out that the kinds of geological changes that scientists say take millions of years (large-scale erosion and stratification) occurred in a matter of days following the massive eruption of Mount St. Helens in Washington State.

Dr. Reese believes that it is important for Christians to become knowledgeable about science and creation. Not only is it necessary for the sake of our children and grandchildren, but it is also useful as a means of evangelism. It is a means of meeting the world where it is. It shows that Christians have not checked their brains when they entered the door of the church.

It was not all work and worship and no play at the retreat. In addition to times of good-natured fellow-



Dr. David Reese with his wife Lee, who assisted with the visuals during his lectures on creation and evolution.



ship at the delicious meals and in the evenings following the sessions, the pastors and wives also enjoyed a free afternoon. This provided time for sightseeing, shopping, reading, napping, and other recreational activities. A few avid golfers even hit the links, despite the cool weather and a threat of rain.

It was a good retreat—thanks to the pastors of the Central District who planned and conducted it.

— reported by Editor Dick Winfield

Dianna Park commissioned at Pleasant View Church

Vandergrift, Pa. — Dianna Park was commissioned for Christian ministry on Sunday, December 28, 1997, in a service held at the Pleasant View Brethren Church of Vandergrift, where she is a member.

Rev. Thomas J. McLaughlin, pastor of the Pleasant View Church, conducted the commissioning service. He was assisted by church moderator Jim McGraw and members of the deacon board.

Since joining the Pleasant View Church in 1993, Ms. Park has served the congregation as a Sunday school teacher, worship leader, choir director, board of Christian education superintendent, youth leader, and superintendent. She is also a third-year student at Ashland Theological Seminary, living in Vandergrift and commuting to the seminary each week. [†]



Dianna Park with Pastor T.J. McLaughlin.



David West gives delegates at Ohio District Conference a prescription for heartburn

New Lebanon, Ohio — “I came here today to give you heartburn!” Rev. David West told the 81 delegates who gathered at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon on Saturday, April 25, for the Ohio District Conference. “I want your hearts to burn with passion, the same passion that burned in the heart of the prophet Jeremiah,” he continued.

Rev. West, Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church, who noted that this was his first visit to an Ohio District Conference, went on to mention five areas in which he would like to see heartburn increase among Brethren. They include (1) a passionate burning for the Word of God; (2) a passionate burning to live authentic Christian lives that reflect the reality of the inner Word; (3) a passionate burning for new insights from the Holy Spirit; (4) a passionate burning of a holy fear of God; and (5) a passionate burning for the unity of the Body of Christ that recognizes Christ as its only head.

Following Rev. West’s message, Moderator J. Michael Drushal capably led the first of two conference business sessions. The session was moving smoothly and swiftly forward, with routine reports, action on a new budget, elections, and more reports. But then it hit a couple of snags.

The first of these concerned a change in the district by-laws to clarify which of two boards—the Board of Oversight or the Ministerial Examining Board—should review complaints brought against an ordained elder. After considerable discussion, it was decided that such matters should be referred to the Board of Oversight, but that this board should act jointly with the district Ministerial Examining

Board in dealing with such complaints. The by-laws were amended accordingly.

The other snag was a request by the Dayton Hillcrest Brethren Church for approval from the Ohio Conference to withdraw from the district. One of the few remaining Brethren members of the congregation was at the conference to present the case for withdrawal and to answer questions. When it became clear that no informed decision could be made at this conference session (the request had been received less than two weeks before the conference), the matter was referred to the Board of Oversight.

One of the most exciting parts of the conference occurred during the “denominational update” that followed the afternoon business session. First, Ron and Sandy Miller shared their sense of God’s call and their enthusiasm for planting a new church in the Ohio District—Living Waters Community Church—which will use the facilities of the former Walcrest Brethren Church on the outskirts of Mansfield.

This was followed by an upbeat presentation by Mike Sove and Chuck Wolfenbarger, co-pastors of the Vineyard Community Church, formerly the Northview Brethren Life Church near Franklin, Ohio. They told how God brought together a small congregation with a big building (Northview Brethren Life) and a large congregation with no building (the Vineyard Church) to form a unified congregation that now averages more than 200 in attendance on Sunday mornings.

Following auxiliary sessions, the conference concluded with moderator’s observations and installation of officers and board and committee members. Continuing another year as moderator (because last year’s moderator-elect is no longer a part of the district) is Dr. J. Michael Drushal. The new moderator-elect is Rev. Lynn Mercer. Other officers are Rev. Ralph Gibson—secretary; Joan Ronk—assistant secretary; Stan Gentle—treasurer; Rev. Bill Walk—assistant treasurer; and Dorman Ronk—statistician. The 1999 conference is set for April 24 at the Fremont Brethren Church.

— reported by Editor Dick Winfield

Dr. Ron Williams performs “live recording concert”

Highland Hills, Ohio — Dr. C. Ronald S. Williams II, pastor of Mt. Zion Fellowship of the Brethren Church of Highland Hills and an accomplished pianist, recording artist, and songwriter, performed a “live recording concert” with members of the Cleveland Orchestra on Good Friday. The concert included selections by The Voices of Koinonia, the adult gospel choir of the Mt. Zion congregation.

A crowd of 1,600 attended the concert, which was held in the sanctuary of the Mt. Zion Church. The concert was recorded on a 24-track sound system and video-taped by a professional video company.

After graduating from Ashland Theological Seminary, Dr. Williams began the Mt. Zion congregation as a Brethren Home Mission Church in 1982 with 15 members. Membership is now approximately 2,675, and worship attendance runs between 1,600 and 2,000. [†]

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A newsletter for Brethren people

June 1998

Editor Dick Winfield asks:

Is it time to get serious about pastoral recruitment?

CURRENTLY, 16 Brethren congregations are without pastors. Two other churches are seeking associates. But only five or six Brethren pastors not already serving congregations are seeking pastorates (not nearly enough to go around). And only one Brethren pastoral candidate graduated from Ashland Theological Seminary this spring. *Is it time to get serious about pastoral recruitment in The Brethren Church?*

Some of these 16 churches will need to do what many other Brethren congregations have had to do in the past ten years, seek a pastor from outside our denomination. Some will get pastors from other Brethren churches, leaving those congregations without pastors. *Is it time to get serious about pastoral recruitment in The Brethren Church?*

It has sometimes been suggested that no church should be entitled to a pastor if that church has not "produced" a pastor. If that were the practice, would your church be entitled to a pastor? Has anyone from your congregation become a Brethren pastor in this generation?

Whose responsibility is it?

Whose responsibility is it to get serious about pastoral recruitment? Obviously denominational and district leaders in The Brethren Church have a responsibility. Pastors themselves play a major role, for they have the opportunity to challenge their members to consider Christian service and to mentor those who respond. And Christian parents certainly have a responsibility to talk to their children about whether God is calling them to Christian service.

Does that let everyone else off the

hook? Certainly not! Every Brethren person has a responsibility. Every member of the church needs to get serious about pastoral recruitment. Here are five ways of doing so.

What you can do

1. Treat the pastor you now have with respect, and encourage others in your congregation to do the same. Why would anyone, particularly a young person, want to become a pastor, if he sees his own pastor criticized and treated unkindly?

2. Do your part to make sure that your pastor receives a more-than-adequate salary. Suggest salary increases and vote for increases when they are proposed. And give generously to your church to help make the funds for increases available.

No one should go into the Lord's work for the money. Nevertheless, the Bible says that "the worker deserves his wages" (1 Tim. 5:18), and "elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor [pay], especially those whose work is preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17, *NIV*). More young people (and older people, too) might consider the pastorate if they knew that they were not consigning themselves to a life of financial hardship.

3. Help your youth feel a part of the church. Suggest to your pastor or worship leader that young people be asked to take part in worship services by reading scripture, offering prayers, presenting special music, ushering, and in other ways. This should not be limited to youth Sunday. Also, recommend to your congregation that a youth representative be included on the church board. Some churches already do this.

4. Challenge and encourage young people in your church to consider pastoral ministry. Look particularly for those in your congregation who seem to have the gifts that an effective pastor need. Speak to them personally, noting what you have observed about them, and ask if they have every considered preparing for the Lord's service. And don't overlook some of the "rambunctious" kids in your congregation. A number of pastors started out that way.

The number-one thing

5. Above all else, pray. Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt. 9:37-38, *NIV*). Jesus, of course, was talking about a harvest of people and workers to care for their needs. Those needs exist in our churches today. So pray regularly, fervently that God will provide pastors. As God leads, pray with specific people in mind. And as you pray, be sensitive to ways God can use you to help answer those prayers.

Is it time to get serious about pastoral recruitment in The Brethren Church? If you agree that it is, what are you going to do about it? [✠]

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Hey Dad . . . Listen Up!

By Walt Mueller

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I asked teens to send me a list ranking the five greatest pressures they face. Sixteen-year-old Sarah's list was representative of all the lists I received. At number one she listed the pressure for "looks." She was consumed with self-conscious worry about her hair, make-up, shape, and clothes. Next, she listed "grades for getting into the right college." Third was "drinking," with "sex" and "popularity" fourth and fifth.

Sarah's list was helpful, but the real eye-opener was what followed:

I suffer from a combination of the eating disorders anorexia and bulimia. It is very hard to recover from these devastations, caused largely by the pressure to be thin and to be perfect. I hope that I have helped.

Sarah's vulnerability to the pressures of adolescence, risky behavior, and potentially deadly disease are symptomatic indicators of a deeper problem. Her description of her life sheds light on the true nature of that "deeper problem":

I come from an upper-middle-class home. I'm a straight-A student, class president, and an overachiever in every way. I don't really know why I am anorexic, but I think it's partly because I thought that if I got really sick, people would pay attention to me. The irony of it is that my father is a psychologist. He doesn't know.

From outward appearances, this

is a kid who really has it together. But a look through the front door of her home reveals a different story. **Sarah's problems, concerns, behaviors, and words are woven into a loud cry for help that the most important man in her life never heard.** Too busy with the demands of his work and time spent listening to other people's problems, her father's deaf ears were forcing his little girl to fall deeper and deeper into the pit of adolescent despair. What Sarah wanted and needed more than anything else was a dad who listened to her.

Sarah's experiences and those of millions of other teens like her indicate that fathers often fail to listen to their teens. Research shows that mothers are far more likely than fathers to discuss problems and have close personal talks with their teenage children. As a result, teenage boys and girls both say that they feel freer to go to their mothers than to their fathers to talk openly and discuss problems. **Teenagers tell me that they want desperately to be able to talk with their dads. But they'll stop trying if they think that they aren't being heard.**

Swiss psychologist Paul Tournier wrote, "Every human being needs to express himself. Through lack of opportunity for it, one may become sick." No doubt, one of the leading causes of the crisis of sickness and at-risk behavior in Sarah and count-

less other teens is the absence of a dad committed to loving and leading by listening.

After speaking to an assembly of teens about dealing with the pressures of family life, a girl walked to the front of the room and silently slipped me a neatly folded note. Later that night I opened the paper and read these challenging words:

There's something I feel I should say to you—I don't know if you've heard it before—but, when you talk to all those fathers—tell them—tell them this: Love your teenagers. Always be there. Touch them. Hug them. Take them out on Daddy-dates, and just be their best friend. I have a wonderful father who does these things, yet you can never get enough. A father can never pay attention to his teenager ENOUGH! Please spread this if you're not already. We need it!

G.L.B. (15 year-old in high school)

I've got a message for G.L.B., wherever and whoever she is. I'll probably never see you again, but I want to tell you **how fortunate you are to have a dad who loves you by listening.** I'll keep your note alongside Sarah's as another reminder of my 24-hour-a-day need to turn two listening ears to the words and actions of my kids. Thanks for encouraging this dad to always listen up! [†]

Walt Mueller is president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding. He has worked with teenagers and their families for 23 years and is the author of the award-winning book, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture* (Tyndale House, 1994). He lives with his wife Lisa and their four children in Elizabethtown, Pa.

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Pontius' Puddle



How not to love your teenagers!



© Joel Kaufmann

One Bite at a Time

By Dan Lawson

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN LOST? I mean *really* lost—lost to the point of panic. I know all you guys will grunt and say, “Not me.” There must be something glandular about the male ego and a man’s inability to admit when he is lost.

Have you ever noticed that a man will never stop to ask directions? He will just keep driving around, hoping to happen upon some landmark that will miraculously show him where he is.

This isn’t anything new. Men have behaved like this for years. Even Daniel Boone, the great wilderness explorer, let his male ego get the best of him. He was once asked if he had ever gotten lost while exploring the wilderness. His answer was, “I’ve never been lost a day in my life. There was a time when I was bewildered for about three days, but never lost.”

How do we get lost?

The truth of the matter is, most of us don’t intend to get lost. We set out on our course with the intention of reaching our destination. We don’t want to get lost, and we don’t intend to do so. But for some of us, getting lost seems inevitable.

This is often true in our spiritual journey as well. Most people don’t intend to sin. They don’t start the day thinking, “What evil thing can I do today?” Deep down inside, nearly all of us really want to be good. But if we are honest with ourselves and with God, we have to admit that we have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

So why do we do it? Why do we sin and stray from God’s will for our lives? Perhaps the answer is found in the analogy in Isaiah 53:6,

which compares us to sheep who have gone astray.

The Bible often refers to God’s people as sheep. Perhaps we can gain some insight into our uncanny ability to get lost by looking at sheep.

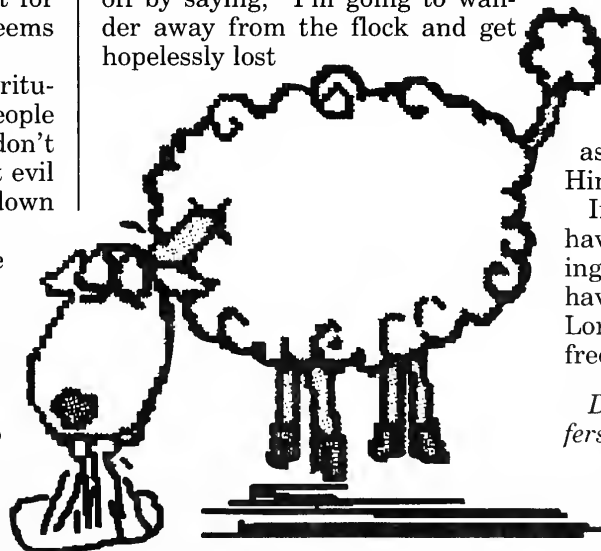
Nibbling away

A farmer once described to me how sheep get lost. He said, “Sheep nibble themselves lost.” A

“We begin by taking a few small steps away from God, thinking, ‘What will it hurt?’ Then we take a few more steps. . . . And a few more steps.”

sheep sees a tantalizing clump of grass just a few feet away so it goes over and nibbles on it. Soon it sees another and another, until it has nibbled itself away from the flock. By the time it realizes its predicament, it is hopelessly lost.

I believe our spiritual condition is similar. The sheep doesn’t start off by saying, “I’m going to wander away from the flock and get hopelessly lost



today.” Neither do we. None of us get out of bed and say, “I’m going to defy God and live in sin today.” But sometimes that is just what we do.

Satan is subtle

The devil wants God’s people. Think about it. He already has the people of the world. But he also wants God’s people. He is smart enough to know that he cannot snatch us out of God’s hands. So he tries to lure us away subtly with tantalizing tidbits.

We begin by taking a few small steps away from God, thinking, “What will it hurt?” Then we take a few more steps. “It won’t matter if I miss church this one Sunday.” And a few more steps. “The church doesn’t really need my offering.” Before we know it, we are completely out of the presence of God. At that point Satan has won; he has accomplished his objective of separating us from God. We are a frog in a kettle of lukewarm water. Satan keeps turning up the heat, and we continue to adapt until it is too late.

Preventive measures

The safest way to make sure that you are never lured away from God is to stay close to Him. Keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). Don’t let Satan draw your attention away from

God. Keep your mind focused on the things of the Lord (Phil. 4:8). Then you will not be so easily tempted.

Read His Word daily, and set aside a special quiet time just for Him each day.

If, however, you find that you have wandered away from the saving grace of the Lord, you don’t have to stay there. Return to the Lord. He will have mercy and will freely pardon (Isaiah 55:7). [†]

Dr. Lawson is pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Indiana. This article is one of a series in which Dr. Lawson applies Bible truth to our personal lives.

How are we financing new Brethren churches?

By Reilly R. Smith

MANY BRETHREN PEOPLE are asking questions about Brethren Impact Church Planting. Some of the most frequently asked questions center on how these new churches are being financed, especially on how the method of supporting church-planting pastors has changed. In this article I want to explain what we are doing financially and why we are doing it.

The way it was

Let me begin by providing some background. Church-planting is costly. The way we planted churches in the past consumed huge amounts of financial and human resources. For many years Brethren provided support for pastors, for programs, and sometimes for property for *home mission* churches.

Giving long-term support to some home mission churches often prevented Brethren Missions from starting other new churches, because those congregations used up all the financial resources available. This discouraged potential church planters, because they knew that no funds were available. It also provided no incentive for home mission churches to become self-supporting, since the district and/or national mission boards continued to support them. Most of our home mission churches during the past 30 years received support for seven to ten years, and a few churches received support for twice that long.

The way it is now

Brethren Impact churches will receive financial assistance for three years. They will need help from Brethren groups and individuals as well as from district and national mission boards, because the budgets of these boards are not large enough to provide complete support. The positive side of this is that the support base of these churches will be much larger, since it will include the district and national mission boards,

local churches, groups within local churches, and individuals whom God touches with the vision for the new church.

Building a support team

Brethren Impact church planters must raise from 40 to 60 percent of their own support. They benefit by doing so, because they build a team of committed supporters who give much more than money. People who invest in other people or in special projects take a personal interest in those people and projects. They pray. They provide encouragement. They get others enthused. Sometimes they also give their time and efforts. Our Lord Jesus stated the principle in the Sermon on the Mount: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21, *NIV*).

Our church planters receive training from Dynamic Church Planting International in how to build their support teams. Consultant Jim Carpenter is training our church planters using *People Raising* by William Dillon (Moody Press). The premise of the book is that people really want to invest in significant Kingdom work. Church planters offer the Brethren opportunities to participate in something eternal through *people raising*.

The church planter doesn't pressure people to give. He shares his vision and invites people to join the support team. Those who can't invest financially are encouraged to pray for the new church-planting team.

Developing a plan

Brethren Impact church planters cast a vision and develop a plan for a new church. They receive encouragement from and are accountable to a trained mentor and a steering committee. Together the church planter, mentor, and steering committee can evaluate the progress of the new church and make timely adjustments when necessary to ensure success. They can also stop

projects which are not working before they exhaust the church planter, the core ministry team, and many other valuable resources.

Brethren Impact churches will start larger and healthier than past home mission churches did. The planter builds a core ministry team of 40 to 60 trained workers before executing a massive outreach campaign. The goal is to launch public worship services with between 150 and 200 people and to retain most of these people.

These new Brethren churches will be self-supporting more quickly. They will purchase their own property and provide their own facilities. They will also reproduce themselves within a few years. And they will provide the lion's share of future pastors, church planters, and missionaries for The Brethren Church.

We all receive frequent requests for money. Most come from worthwhile causes. But we don't respond to every request. We can't. We give to those people, projects, and organizations that strike a responsive chord in our hearts.

No greater cause

No cause is more important than winning men, women, and children for Jesus Christ. Statistical studies show that starting new churches is the most effective way to evangelize lost people—anywhere in the world.

If local Brethren churches will do their best to practice good stewardship with regard to district and denominational support; if Sunday school classes, auxiliary organizations, and other local groups will adopt church-planting projects; if individual Brethren people will invest in church planters and new churches; then God will supply everything we need to start many new Brethren churches and to win many people to Christ.

No one needs to do it all. No one needs to give to every project. Pray about which people and projects God wants you to support. Participate as the Holy Spirit leads you. And prepare to celebrate God's blessing on Christ's kingdom through The Brethren Church. [†]

Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.



Domestic Violence: A Christian Response

By Morven R. Baker

This is the first in a series of three articles by Morven R. Baker on domestic violence. This article provides biblical and historical perspectives on the problem. The second will look at kinds of domestic abuse, and the third will look at how Christians can respond to the cries of those who are abused.

Mrs. Baker is a licensed professional clinical counselor associated with Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates in Ashland, Ohio. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Pastoral Counseling and Psychology from Ashland Theological Seminary. Her husband, David, is professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at the seminary, and they have two college-age children. They are members of the University (Brethren) Church in Ashland.

THE DAY BEFORE I was to give a presentation on domestic violence, the lid to the washing machine fell against my nose, breaking it. I appeared before the audience the next day with two lovely shiners, radiantly black and blue. The laughter of the audience when they heard my explanation broke the tension created by my appearance. The bruises, physical and psychological, that come from battering, however, are never funny.

In the short time it took you to read the above few words, at least one woman in the United States was battered. On average, a woman is battered every eighteen seconds. Every day, at least four women are killed by their partners. One out of two women has been or will be battered by someone she knows and loves. Nearly six million women are beaten by their husbands annually; 52 percent of all women murdered in the United States are murdered by their former or current partners.

An article in the *Ashland Times-Gazette* dated January 23, 1998, quoted Secretary of State Bob Taft saying that "domestic violence is one of our society's tragedies. You can see this in the over 50,000 domestic violence complaints filed in Ohio in 1996. That number, of course, does not represent the incidents of domestic violence that go unreported." He also noted that more than 115,000 adults and almost 20,000 children were served by domestic violence shelters in Ohio in 1996.

"But not in Christian homes!"

These statistics are difficult to hear, especially for Christians. If we had the privilege of being raised in loving homes, we tend to discount the statistics or to say at least, "But those are not Christian homes. Domestic violence does not happen in Christian homes." As a sister in Christ and as a counselor who works primarily with women who have been battered and abused, I am here to tell you that domestic violence **does** happen in Christian homes. Battering occurs at least once in two-thirds of all marriages, Christian and non-Christian alike. We can no longer deny this terrible reality.

I tell my clients that Jesus is our ultimate role model. If we have questions about life, we should always look and see how Jesus handled these matters. In other words, if Jesus said something, then that's good enough for me. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus said:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
RSV, emphasis added

Here is our model, but it is not a model that society or the church has been willing to imitate.

In the beginning

To discover how we have gotten where we are today, we need to start at the beginning. As time begins, we have a lonely man, Adam, and a loving God, who is concerned for Adam's happiness. So God says, "It isn't good for the man to live alone. I need to make a suitable partner for him" (Gen. 2:18, *Contemporary English Version*).

This was God's original view of what marriage should be—a partnership in which love and respect are mutual. But sin came into the picture, and a different view of marriage emerged.

In ancient times, women (and children) were widely viewed as the property of the husband, like his sheep and cattle. Sexual assault of a woman was considered to be a property violation, and therefore an offense against the husband (the owner of the property) rather than an injustice to the wife. A hierarchical relationship also developed between men and women. As John Goldingay has said, "to love and to cherish became to desire and dominate."

In Medieval times, the majority of the clergy taught that the husband had both the right and the obligation to beat his wife. According to *The Rules of Marriage*, if a husband's verbal correction was not effective, then he was to "take up a stick and beat her, not out of rage, but out of charity and concern for her soul so

(continued on next page)



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that the beating would rebound to your merit and to her good" (O'Faolain and Martines).

John Calvin's position

During the period of the Reformation, John Calvin gave this reply to a woman who wrote requesting assistance in leaving her abusive husband:

We have a special sympathy for poor women who are evilly and roughly treated by their husbands, because of the roughness and cruelty of the tyranny and captivity which is their lot. We do not find ourselves permitted by the Word of God, however, to advise a woman to leave her husband, except by force of necessity; and we do not understand this force to be operative when a husband behaves roughly and uses threats to his wife, nor even when he beats her, but [only] when there is imminent peril to her life, whether from persecution by the husband or by his conspiring. . . . We exhort her to bear with patience the cross which God has seen fit to place upon her; and meanwhile not to deviate from the duty which she has before God to please her husband, but to be faithful whatever happens.

Despite his sympathy for her condition, Calvin's understanding of Scripture prevented him from intervening in her situation or from advising her to separate from her husband unless she was in immediate danger of death. Furthermore, he interpreted her situation as "Christian" in the sense that she should view it as following Christ in the way of His cross.

Sadly, many pastors today have not progressed very far beyond Calvin in their response to domestic violence. Dell Martin in the book *Battered Women* reports advice she received from her pastor when she went to him for help:

Early in our marriage I went to a clergyman who, after a few visits, told me that my husband meant no real harm, that he was just confused and felt insecure. I was encouraged to be more tolerant and understanding. Most important, I was told to forgive him the beatings just as Christ had forgiven me from the cross.

Phyllis and James Alsdurf in their book *Battered into Submission* share the following, which a woman wrote to them:

I would never in my wildest nightmares have dreamed that my husband would ever abuse me, but he did. My husband is a Christian, but his rage at things is unreal. I took our two-month son and fled after the fourth time he struck me, but I had received counsel that it was my duty to stay and suffer for Jesus' sake.

We have come a long, long way from the loving relationship between Adam and Eve that God intended. Their marriage relationship was to be a picture of the love relationship between God and His people. The nation of Israel was often spoken of as the wife of the Lord (see Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:8; Hos. 2:16-20). Likewise, the Christian church is seen as the radiant "bride of Christ" (Eph. 5:22-33).

A partnership

God created a partnership in the garden. It was not His intent for one of the "partners" to dominate the other. The Apostle Paul tells us:

Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as

they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body—and we are its living parts. . . . To sum up; you too, **each one of you**, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

Eph. 5:25-33, *The Jerusalem Bible*, emphasis added

This sounds pretty straightforward. Yet not long ago I had a young husband in my office who defended his right to be physically abusive to his wife by saying that he was the "priest" in his own home and that this gave him the right to do whatever he wanted. This is "scripture twisting." It is not what God intended.

Scripture is clear. Exodus 22:22-24 tells us: "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword . . ." (RSV). Let there be no mistake—God clearly protects women and children, the most helpless members of society.

Jesus, our role model

Remember, if Jesus is our role model, we must follow His leading. Jesus gave people—both men and women—their dignity. He gently chided His disciples when they stopped the children from coming to see Him. He made everyone who came to Him feel special—that He had time for each one. He treated the men and women who followed Him with equal regard. He dearly loved both His male and His female friends. He taught both men and women and illustrated His parables with both women and men. He announced His Messiahship first to a woman, and He made His first appearance as the resurrected Christ to women.

Domestic violence is a difficult subject to discuss. There are few who are willing to open their ears to hear the cries of the afflicted. But as Christians, we have been commanded by Jesus to follow His example. It is our Christian duty to model to victims of domestic violence the love and compassion of Christ. [†]

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



July-August 1998

Volume 11, Number 6

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

It seems only last week that I wrote my letter for the *Newsletter*, and here it is time to write another! The days, weeks, and months are passing too quickly for me.

We visited with two of our sons and daughters-in-law over the week-end in early May. Jim and Susie are in Wabash and Susie was directing a play. Both Matt and Nate were in the play, and we just had to see them. The play was "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." It was a real cute play. Matt was Merlin the Magician and Nate was the Jester. Both did good jobs and made Grandma and Grandpa proud!

On Sunday we went to church with Glenn and Sarah in Nappanee. They are moving to Arizona on June 8 and will be part of a new church planting in a city near Phoenix. It's very exciting, but farther away from Ohio. But when I retire, Jim and I can spend our winters in Arizona, spring in North Carolina, fall in Wabash, and stay home in Ashland for summer. Sounds nice, doesn't it!

During the morning worship service at Nappanee, a young man, the worship leader, gave devotions based on Psalm 23. I would like to mention some of what he said.

"The LORD is my shepherd. He is really everything we need. He should be (and can be) Lord of our lives. He provides love, gives us peace, gives us everything we need. He is everything to us.

(continued on page 3)

SPRING CLEANING

Devotions presented by Phyllis Jervis
at the Ohio District W.M.S. Conference, April 25, 1998

*Create in me a clean heart, O God;
and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10 (KJV)*

If you are feeling like the end of a hard winter, God's joy can make you like a breath of spring.

I have enjoyed scanning a book with household hints for spring housecleaning. Anything to make this job easier is for me!

Here are a few miscellaneous hints for starters:

— For those yucky jobs, like cleaning the black cookstove, rub lard under your fingernails.

— For feather beds, place the feather beds and pillows out of doors on the grass or on a clean, flat roof, and allow them to be thoroughly drenched by a warm summer rain. Hang them to the limb of a tree to dry in the shade.

— For care of your dishcloth, wash it in soapsuds and rinse in cold water, or add lemon juice and salt to the water, or a teaspoonful of kerosene. A greasy dishcloth affords a breeding place for the germs of diphtheria, typhoid, and other filth diseases.

Oh, did I tell you that this book was written in 1909?

Here is more general advice: "Spring house cleaning should ordinarily be postponed until the weather has become sufficiently settled, so that winter underwear, draperies, carpets, etc., may be stored away if desired, and so the health of the household need not suffer by reason of the open windows and dampness attendant upon scrubbing floors and walls, whitewashing, painting, and the like. Most women, after constant confinement during the winter months, are more or less run down in the spring, and the change from the bracing temperature of

winter to the enervating warmth of the first spring days is like to result in a lowering of tone that may expose them to serious mischief from overexertion. For these reasons there is a gradual change of sentiment in favor of making spring house cleaning a comparatively simple affair, putting off the heavy work until the fall."

Although this author suggests postponing heavy tasks until fall, some jobs need to be done now. So, in anticipation, let me read how you should prepare to clean. "Experienced housewives arrange for house cleaning by preparing food in advance, boiling ham, baking beans, pies, bread, and cake, so as to be spared as far as possible the labor of cooking while house cleaning is going on."

In comparison to the homemakers of the early 1900s, we have life pretty easy in the late 1900s, as modern appliances have made our cleaning tasks much less complicated and exhausting. However, we have made our lives full and sometimes cluttered because of all the activities we do.

This housecleaning job isn't impossible if we look for "Joy in the Journey" as we move from room to room, removing the winter's accumulation of debris.

While doing windows, see through the glass as God's light shines upon our lives. Thank Him for the sparkling view of His creation, fresh and new!

When picking up after hubby and children or freshening their rooms, pray for them and their special needs.

While doing mundane chores like
(continued on page 4)

District Doings



Susan Barnes submitted this report of the Northeast OHIO District rally, which was held at Trinity Brethren Church in North Canton April 18.

There were 39 ladies present, the same as last year. The rally was hosted by the Senior W.M.S. and the Juniores W.M.S. of Trinity.

Susan Barnes welcomed the ladies and led in prayer. Everyone enjoyed Melinda Dannemiller, the storyteller. She told the story of the "Rainbow Crow," "I'll Love You Forever, I'll Like You for Always," and ended with the audience participating with sign language to the song, "What a Wonderful World."

Following the stories, all joined in for some singing. Oh, how beautiful the voices were! The sanctuary was filled with music in praise to our Lord!

Some of the young men of the Trinity congregation served a delicious luncheon of chicken/dressing casserole, gelatin salad, rolls, beverages, and cake.

We reassembled in the sanctuary for the afternoon session. Following prayer by Susan Barnes, Gail Griffin led in devotions, using the theme of "God's Promises" and what it is to be a child of God.

Wanda Powell, the N.E. Ohio District president, conducted the business meeting. A representative from each society told what her society did in the past year while the project offerings were received. The project offerings were designated for the Northview Brethren Life Church in Franklin, Ohio. Wanda announced that the balance in the Marge Fund is \$897. This is a scholarship for Ohio Brethren girls attending Ashland University.

Future plans were announced: The women's retreat will be held October 23-24 at Camp Bethany. The Damascus Road Trio will be there. The 1999 spring rally will be at Garber Brethren Church in Ashland.

Shirley Black, national W.M.S. president, thanked everyone for her prayers and cards. She emphasized the importance of attending conference and asked for volunteers for

various committees. She reminded us to be in prayer for our W.M.S. societies. The Mission Board needs us to keep our focus on missions. W.M.S. is a very important ministry. Shirley challenged us to think of ways to attract the younger women to our W.M.S. groups or to form new societies. Please be in prayer for this.

Carolyn Brandon reported that the North Georgetown Church has begun a group, which is attended by both non-W.M.S. and W.M.S. women. They meet on the fourth Thursday at 9:30 for prayer and then a time of sewing and fellowship. They are the Dorcas group.

The OHIO District W.M.S. Conference was hosted by the New Lebanon Afternoon and Evening societies April 25.

In the absence of Wanda Powell, president, Betty Deardurff presided. Phyllis Jervis, a member of the Gretna Lamplighters society, gave devotions entitled "Spring Cleaning" (see page 1). She read several household tips from a book published in 1909. One suggestion which is never outdated is her reminder to pray Psalm 51:10 ("Create in me a clean heart, O God"), because we need spiritual cleaning as much or more than our house.

Betty announced that \$800 was received at the spring rally for the district project. Gifts for the two-year project, the Northview Brethren Church, total \$1,865. The ladies selected Living Waters Community Church near Mansfield for the new two-year project. Sandi Miller, the pastor's wife, spoke about their call and dedication, as well as the involvement of members of their core group.

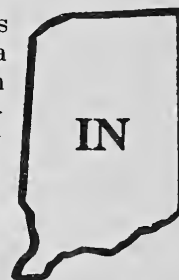
During discussion of the commitments, the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11) were chosen for the Bible study next year. The book *Blessed Are We* by Lawson was suggested as a resource guide.

A few ladies reported special ways in which their societies show love and compassion: cards, lap robes, and afghans sent to residents in nursing homes, quilts for crack babies, and valentine boxes sent to their college students.

In the conference session, Randy and Karen Best reported from the Riverside School. They gave their appreciation for all the assistance the churches give to the school: clothing, coupons, work teams, finances, and especially prayers. Randy, assistant principal, reported 110 students were enrolled in school this year. Seventy have accepted Christ as their Savior, others have rededicated their lives, and some have become life-time recruits for their Lord.

The staff meets at 7:30 a.m. daily for prayer. On Sundays the faculty and staff go into four different counties for Sunday services.

In the previous two issues, the idea of Society Sisters in Indiana was introduced — who they are and what they do. Now, look over Joyce Gaskin's shoulder in New Paris to read what she wrote to the Burlington W.M.S.



"Dear W.M.S. Society Sisters,

"We feel honored to have you as our 'Society Sisters' for 1998. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to share and encourage you as we strive to serve our Lord.

"Our group is made up of 12 ladies and our average attendance is 7 to 8, with the exception of our 1997 Christmas gathering—when all 12 attended. Each year we draw
(continued on next page)

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Subscription price, \$7.50 per year in advance.

Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

District Doings (continued)

names at our December meeting for a new 'Secret Sister' for the coming year. At this meeting we have a delicious carry-in dinner, a wonderful Christmas program of carols and readings, and then we share a gift with the 'Secret Sister' we have had for the year. We have loads of fun as we try to guess who our 'Secret Sister' has been. In the course of the year, we acknowledge birthdays and anniversaries as well as cards of love and encouragement to our sister.

"We also have a Friendship Basket that will normally circulate to each member at least once through each year. Our basket is a lovely large white basket and, when a member receives it, she will find it has been filled with nice surprises from the member who had it last. The basket may have anywhere from one item to as many as six or eight items. I have personally received a sweatshirt (hand decorated by a W.M.S. sister), candles, a friendship coffee mug, stationery and cards, candy, bath oils, and homemade goodies, to name a few. After the excitement of receiving the basket, a donation in appreciation of the gift is placed in a small box that stays in the basket. The money is then used toward our mission projects.

"For our Christmas project we sent \$100 to the Lost Creek Riverside School staff. Our group also voted at the January meeting to sponsor one of the children in the Kumars' orphanages at a cost of \$21 per month.

"Our study book for this year is *Joshua, Victorious by Faith*. We are sharing in the teaching responsibilities as we study this year. It is a good experience for us as we work to become better followers of our Lord.

"We have great expectations for mission opportunities for this year, and we know that your group will be busy in His service, also.

"Another interesting fact to share with you — a former member of the Burlington Church, Paul Wayne Hendrix, transferred his membership to our church. His wife, Carolyn, is an active member of our W.M.S. group. Paul and Carolyn have a book of the history of the

Burlington Church. As Carolyn shares more from this book, we are certain our relationship with our 'Society Sisters' will strengthen.

"May the Lord bless you and —
"TO GOD BE THE GLORY"

"New Paris First Brethren W.M.S.
Gerry Swartz, President
Edna VanDiepenbos, Bea Bischof
Margaret Stump, Grace Cline
Carolyn Hendrix, Cindy Hanson
Wanda Miller, Carol Smith
Jan Tredway, Marie Brookins
Joyce Gaskin, Secretary"

Thanks, Joyce, for sharing your letter with all of us. Congratulations to you ladies for serving the Lord in effective ministries. We appreciate the Society Sister idea.

The President's Pen

(continued)

"The LORD is MY shepherd. It is a personal thing. He gives us His undivided attention when we ask Him. We can go to Him anytime. The LORD is MY Shepherd.

"The LORD is my SHEPHERD. A shepherd leads and cares for his sheep. The Lord is always watching over us and guiding us, if we seek His guidance. So, follow your "Shepherd."

How long has it been since you read the 23rd Psalm? Read it again and think on the words.

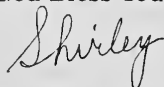
Don't forget, Conference is the week of August 3-7 in Ashland. I hope that many of you are planning to attend. The W.M.S. luncheon is Wednesday at 12:30.

Wednesday morning Cheryl Schmiedt from Manteca, California, will lead a seminar and in the afternoon there will be a panel discussion on her seminar topic. I hope we have a good turnout to hear God's message through her.

Thanks again for your prayers. This spring I have had shingles on my face and in my mouth, but they are almost gone. New medication is available now for shingles, and it takes care of them very quickly.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at General Conference.

God Bless You,



Shirley Black

Missionary Miscellany

Ginny Hoyt, administrative assistant of the Missionary Ministries Council, gave this information for praise and prayer.

PRAISE

Allen Baer has served for 15 years in Argentina. Well done, good and faithful servant! Allen will attend General Conference, as well as **José Rivero** of Argentina and **Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri** of Colombia.

Church planters **Jim and Stephanie Boyd** of Vista, California, were praying for 75 people to come to their Easter Preview Service. 105 people attended! Praise the Lord!

PRAYER

Allen Baer concludes his ministry and anticipates relocating in Arizona. Pray, too, for the national leaders who will assume his responsibilities.

Todd and Tracy Ruggles desire to adopt a baby. Unfortunately, their first request was rejected; however, there is hope. They have become aware of a Christian agency, where they will continue to try.

Pastor **Tom and Debbie Sprowls** have completed their ministry at Living HOPE Brethren Church in Medina, Ohio. Keep them and their three children (Luke, Leah, Levi) in your prayers as they relocate. Their new address is 207 Broadway St., Berlin, Pennsylvania 15530.

Jeff and Zenita Kaplan are attempting to sell their home in southern California, so they can move to Douglas County, Colorado, to begin their church plant.

Church planters **Mike and Barbara Woods** need to find a home in Winchester, Virginia.

Bob Pocai, the churchman and maintenance supervisor of the 13 buildings at Lost Creek Church and Riverside School, has been diagnosed with a mass on one lung.

Thanks!

This year the \$1,000 scholarship at Ashland University was divided between two seniors, who are active members of their home Brethren church. Tracy Hammond wrote:

"Thank you so much for the scholarship, which I received from you for this year. I will graduate May 9 with a degree in elementary education. I plan to work this summer and look for a job.

"Love, Tracy Hammond"

Michelle Roblin wrote:

"I wanted to take this time to thank you for your continued support during my last year at Ashland University. Your generosity was instrumental in helping me to pay for my education.

"Right now I am looking forward to graduation, so I can secure a teaching position to use the knowledge I gained while at Ashland. As of now, my husband, Jason, and I will stay in the Ashland area for at least another year, because of a recent job change for him. I will pursue a teaching job in or around Ashland.

"I feel that Ashland gave me a quality education and am so happy that you continue to support Ashland University students.

"Sincerely, Michelle Roblin"

Tracy is a member of the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church and Michelle belongs to the Ashland, Ohio, Park Street Church.

Spring Cleaning (continued)

dishes, we should whisper a prayer of thanks for the food, since we are not going hungry.

Sometimes we tidy up a couple rooms to get ready for a W.M.S. meeting or for other guests. We may tuck the clutter in a drawer, stuff it in a closet, or shove it under the bed. The outward appearance of our rooms is nice!

People see only the outer appearance of ourselves, too, as we show them our best side. But, just as we know what is hidden out of sight—in a drawer, the closet, or under the bed—we know that God sees the secrets of our unclean hearts. "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

A WORD ABOUT MONEY

A Popular Subject

Have you heard the rumor that the church is always asking for money? A few years ago, Dear Abby (Abigail Van Buren) responded to a letter from one who attended church "once in a while, but every time we are hit for money. . . . I think it is getting to be a racket. Just what do churches do with all their money?" This letter was signed "Curious" in New Jersey.

The gist of Dear Abby's reply was—salaries, benevolences, utilities, construction/upkeep, etc.

But what about W.M.S.? I have heard the same thing—you take up so many offerings. Why?

W.M.S. was organized to do home and world mission work; therefore, we receive money for both areas. This year our world mission project is the South American Theological Seminary (formerly called the Eden Bible Institute). The Seminary was closed for a few years, but was reopened in March after Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez did intensive preparation. They anticipated 100 students for the first semester. Imagine their joy when 133 registered! The project offering which we will give at General Conference will help to offset the start-up costs of the South American Theological Seminary.

Because the Lord is so faithful and gives much more than we deserve, we respond with a Thank Offering. This is given to benevolences: World and Home Missions, Riverside School in Lost Creek, KY; Campus Ministry and the W.M.S. Scholarship at Ashland University.

An offering is given to Ashland Theological Seminary for general support; this is the only seminary of The Brethren Church. The offering is separate from all other projects and is usually received from a special service or activity in which the purpose of W.M.S. is promoted.

Dues are used for the two publications—the *Devotional Guide* and the *W.M.S. Newsletter*—and for administrative expenses.

All offerings are sent to Joanne Kroft, financial secretary. Then missionary and seminary offerings are given directly to those organizations.

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

This spring our Share group studied John's three epistles. John wrote these letters to Christians in 80-90 A.D., but his themes of practicing love and avoiding false teachers are very relevant.

The verses in I John 3:16-18 coincide with the W.M.S. Commitment 10: show Christian love. John wrote about laying down your life for another (sacrificing your life for another to live, as the teacher did in Arkansas). John continues that, if the love of God is in us, we will give our material possessions (clothing, food, gift certificates, blood at the blood bank, etc.) to those in need to extend their lives. Otherwise, we do not have pity or compassion for them.

That paraphrase is mine, but John's words are in verse 18: "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth." Then receive Christ's blessing, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40, *KJV*). This is another way of finding Joy in the Journey.

At the May Board meeting, the executive committee recommended reading circle books and confirmed plans for General Conference. This information was sent to each president, so you have information before Conference.

Please be sure to return the completed statistical report with your officers' names and addresses to Nancy Hunn, 555 W. Market St., Nappanee, IN 46550-1924, no later than June 30.

Should you have questions about our offerings, please call Joanne Kroft (419-962-4679) or JoAnn Seaman, treasurer (419-289-0027).

I hope many of you will attend General Conference. I look forward to seeing you.

Your friend,



Joan

1998 General Conference Schedule

August 3–7 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Theme: *Visualize Renewal*

Monday, August 3

- 4:00 pm—New Delegate Briefing
- 6:30 pm—Opening Celebration, with comments by Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg and featuring a message by Dr. Terry Wardle
- 8:30 pm—Prayer Time in the auditorium
- 8:30 pm—Ice Cream Social (reservation required)

Tuesday, August 4

- 8:30 am—Business Session
- 11:00 am—Workshop: “Natural Church Development,” presented by Ronald W. Waters
- 2:00 pm—Auxiliary Sessions
- 3:30 pm—Table Talks and Workshop
- 7:00 pm—Worship Service, with message by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

Wednesday, August 5

- 7:00 am—Pastors’ Wives Fellowship and Breakfast (reservation required)
- 8:30 am—Workshop led by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson
- 10:30 am—Men’s Seminar led by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

- 10:30 am—Women’s Seminar led by Mrs. Cheryl Schmiedt
- 12:30 pm—Women’s Luncheon (reservation required)
- 12:30 pm—Men’s Luncheon (reservation required)
- 2:30 pm—Men and Women panel talk
- 3:30 pm—Table Talks and Workshop
- 7:00 pm—Worship Service, with message by Dr. Richard Parrott

Thursday, August 6

- 8:30 am—Business Session
- 11:00 am—Special presentation by “Auca” tribesmen
- 12:30 pm—World Relief Luncheon, with message by Dr. Clive Calver (reservation required)
- 2:00 pm—Auxiliary Sessions
- 5:00 pm—Missions Banquet (reservation required)
- 7:00 pm—Worship Service, with message by Dr. Clive Calver, followed by a quilt auction

Friday, August 7

- 9:00 am—Workshop
- 10:30 am—Closing Session, featuring Youth Convention report and message by Rev. David West

General Conference Registration Information

If you plan to attend General Conference and to make use of any of the services listed on the registration form on page 9 (housing, meals, special events, children’s program, nursery), **please preregister by July 18.** Do not wait until you arrive to register.

General instructions:

1. Room rates do not include sheets and towels. Bring your own or order a linen packet on the form. You will need to bring your own pillow.

2. Every bed used must be paid for, but children may sleep on the **floor** in their parents’ room at no charge. Bring a pad or sleeping bag. Single rooms have floor space for one child, doubles for two, triples for three. A limited number of triple rooms are available. Register early to get your preference.

3. Tickets for meals in the university cafeteria are usable any day, Tuesday through Friday. No refunds will be given, so order only as many tickets as you will need. Please purchase meal tickets now rather than at the door, so that the university will know approxi-

mately how many people to plan for.

4. The Women’s Luncheon, World Relief Soup Luncheon, and Missions Banquet will be held in the Convocation Center; the Men’s Picnic in the newly air-conditioned Redwood Hall.

5. In addition to the children’s program for older children, baby-sitting will be available for infants through pre-schoolers during morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. A schedule will be posted in the program book. All who plan to use the nursery are asked to indicate this on the registration form so that the nursery can be adequately staffed. Activities for children 4 years old through 6th grade are also planned on Thursday during the Missions Banquet.

Other information

Housing — The housing desk, in the Convocation Center lobby, will be open Sunday evening from 6:00 to 9:00; Monday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and after the evening program; and daily throughout the week.

Camping — Campsites are available

at Ashland County Fairgrounds, 2042 Claremont Avenue in Ashland. No advance reservation is required.

Credentials — Delegate credentials should be submitted in person as early as possible during Conference week. Credentials will be received in the Convocation Center lobby Monday 2:00–6:00 p.m. and following the evening program; Tuesday through Friday, 8:00–8:20 a.m.; and Tuesday through Thursday, 6:30–7:00 p.m.

Non-Delegates — Non-delegates are welcome at Conference. Please complete a reservation form. Then when you arrive in Ashland, check in at the credential table to receive a name badge and a Conference packet. A \$10.00 fee will be required.

New-Attendees Briefing — A briefing will be held at 4:00 p.m. Monday in the Convocation Center auditorium. Though planned specifically for first-time attendees, it is open to anyone. It will include a general orientation to Conference plus specific information about business sessions.

Travel Subsidy — If you travel more than 1,500 miles to attend Conference, pick up a travel subsidy form at the credential table when you arrive. [✎]

The 1998 BYIC Convention

August 3–7 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

Theme: *Under Construction*

And being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

THIS YEAR'S BYIC Convention promises to be a week of fun, fellowship, and personal "construction." Many new and exciting events are planned, so please encourage any youth in your congregation to come and be prepared to "build!"

"Ground-breaking" for the BYIC Convention will take place on Monday at 7:00 pm, with a powerful opening worship service. Following this, youth will meet up with their "Construction Crews" and go on a prayer tour of the campus. Afterwards, the National BYIC Steering Committee will help everyone loosen up and get to know each other with a mixer!

The week will also include a missions fair, which will spotlight the various missions fields of the world—including our schools, work-places, homes, and communities, as well as home missions, foreign missions, and church planting.

We will also be taking a trip to

Cedar Point Amusement Park on Wednesday, then coming home to enjoy an exciting concert by Nitro-Praise!

Other highlights of the week will include Communion, a coffeehouse, service projects, personal construction seminars, eye-opening morning praise services, a wide variety of speakers and praise leaders, the informational session and Steering Committee elections, and much, much more!!!! The youth will also join the adults on Tuesday morning to give a youth update; on Tuesday and Thursday nights to share in the worship services; and on Friday morning for the closing worship service.

Post-high youth will have the option of attending the adult business sessions on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. If you have post-high youth from your church coming to the Convention and have extra delegate credentials, encourage them to get involved in these sessions!

Registration information was sent at the end of May to youth leaders, pastors, and all youth who are registered members of the National BYIC. So be looking for it in your mailbox. All youth attending the Convention must pre-register. (No walk-in registrations will be accepted). The last date to register is July 9. All youth will be housed on campus and must remain on campus throughout the entire Convention.

The registration fees are outlined on the registration forms. This fee includes housing for Monday through Thursday nights, all meals except for dinner at Cedar Point on Wednesday, all Convention activities and events, admission to the Nitro-Praise concert, and a T-shirt.

If you have any questions, or if you do not receive registration information, please contact Jaime Gillespie, the BYIC Convention Coordinator, at the Brethren Church National Office. [✠]

Visualizing Renewal at General Conference

A GREAT WEEK of celebration is planned for General Conference in August, focusing on the theme *Visualize Renewal*. The speakers for the week were highlighted in the April EVANGELIST (page 4), but here is a brief review.

Monday night, **Dr. Terry Wardle**, the new associate professor of Church Planting at Ashland Theological Seminary, will help us visualize how God can renew our hearts. (See the back page for more about Dr. Wardle.) He will also present a workshop Friday morning on church planting.

Tuesday night, **Dr. Bruce H. Wilkinson**, founder and president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, will speak about renewal of family relationships. Dr. Wilkinson is one of the

most respected communicators of biblical truth in the church today. In addition to his Tuesday evening message, Dr. Wilkinson will lead two workshops on Wednesday morning.

Wednesday night, **Dr. Richard L. Parrott** will look at how God can renew our spirits. Dr. Parrott, a gifted speaker, is director of the doctoral studies program at Ashland Theological Seminary.

Thursday the focus will be on renewal of our zeal for missions. **Dr. Clive Calver**, president of World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals, will speak at both the World Relief luncheon and the evening service. Dr. Calver, from England, delivers a powerful message with a delightful British accent.

On Friday morning one of our own men, **Rev. David West**, will help us visualize renewal of the church. Rev. West is Director of Congregation Min-

istries and Director of U.S. Missions for The Brethren Church.

A previously unannounced **special event** will occur Thursday morning, when two members of the infamous

Auca (now called Waoroni) tribe of Ecuador will speak. One of the two took part in the massacre of five missionaries in 1956, and the other is the son of one of the participants. Appearing with them will be Steve Saint, son



Mencaye, one of the "Aucas" who will speak at Conference. of one of the five slain missionaries. The very presence of these men together will be a wonderful visualization of God's power to renew. [✠]

Theme:
"Visualize Renewal"

1998 General Conference

Registration Form

Monday, August 3, through
 Friday, August 7

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____

Please reserve only one room per form. **Youth** must register through the National BYIC if staying in the Youth Dorm; if staying with adults, use this form. **Note:** Registration with prepayment by July 18 results in guaranteed reservation.

Housing: Rates** Prepaid by July 18 Upon arrival

Ashland University Dormitory Single \$18.00 \$22.00

Floor: Women's restroom _____ Men's _____ Double 26.00 33.00

Room type: Single _____ Double _____ Triple 36.00 43.00

Triple _____ **no charge for children not sleeping in a bed

Nights staying: S _____ M _____ T _____ W _____ Th _____

Other preferences: _____

Note: Above rates do not include linen. See linen rates at right.

Housing costs calculation

No. nights x rate/night
 _____ x _____ = \$ _____

Linen packet (2 sheets,
 2 towels, 1 wash cloth)

No. of packets x rate
 _____ x \$3.50 = \$ _____

Total Housing = \$ _____

Meal Tickets

Meals are served in University cafeteria; tickets are usable any day—order as many tickets as you need for the week.

		No. tickets	
Breakfast	Adults	_____	x \$4.20 = \$ _____
	Children under 12	_____	x \$2.10 = \$ _____
Lunch	Adults	_____	x \$5.60 = \$ _____
	Children under 12	_____	x \$2.80 = \$ _____
Dinner	Adults	_____	x \$7.00 = \$ _____
	Children under 12	_____	x \$3.50 = \$ _____

Special Event Reservations

Reservations for the following events are required due to early deadlines. Tickets ordered after July 18 are subject to availability. No meal refunds after July 24.

Mon. 8:30 p.m. — Ice Cream Social Adults _____ x \$3.00 = \$ _____
 Children under 12 _____ x \$1.50 = \$ _____

Wed. 7:00 a.m. — Pastors' Wives Continental Breakfast/Fellowship _____ x \$4.25 = \$ _____

Wed. 12:30 p.m. — Women's Luncheon Adults _____ x \$8.00 = \$ _____
 Children under 6 _____ x \$4.50 = \$ _____
 Children under 3 _____ x free

Wed. 12:30 p.m. — Men's Picnic _____ x \$8.00 = \$ _____

Thur. 12:30 p.m. — World Relief Soup Luncheon _____ (offering will be taken)

Thur. 5:00 p.m. — Missions Banquet _____ x \$10.00 = \$ _____

Total meals and special events reservations enclosed = \$ _____

Summary Totals

Total Housing = \$ _____

Total Meals and
 Special Events = \$ _____

Total Children's
 Program = \$ _____

Total Enclosed = \$ _____

Make checks payable to:

The Brethren Church

Send to:

General Conference Housing
 524 College Ave.
 Ashland, OH 44805

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date rec. _____

Amount rec. _____

Check # _____

Children's Program (ages 4 years through completed 6th grade):

Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Thursday, 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.;
 Friday, 8:15 a.m. to noon. Lunch provided Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Family Rate: 1 child, \$46/week, \$15/day; 2 or more children, \$70/week, \$24/day.

Child's Name _____

Age/Grade
 Completed _____

Days (circle)

T W Th F \$ _____

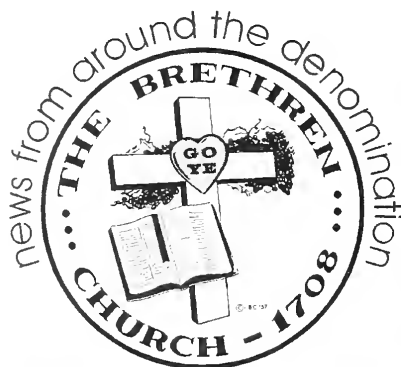
T W Th F \$ _____

T W Th F \$ _____

Total for Children's Program \$ _____

Will you have small children in the nursery? If so, how many babies _____ and/or toddlers _____?

Mail this form, with payment in full, as soon as possible (and no later than July 18).
 Send to: General Conference Housing, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805



Lilith Howard receives a certificate and corsage from Mulvane pastor Rev. Joseph Hanna.

Lilith Howard honored for 50 years as a deaconess

Mulvane, Kans. — Lilith Howard was honored on Sunday, February 23, by the Mulvane Brethren Church for her more than 50 years of faithful service as a deaconess.

Pastor Joseph Hanna presented Mrs. Howard a certificate of recognition and a corsage during the morning worship service.

Mrs. Howard has been a member of the Mulvane congregation for 76 years and is recognized as the oldest living member of the church. She noted that she was baptized February 22, 1922, 76 years and one day before receiving this special honor.

— From the *Mulvane News* of 2-27-98; submitted by Pastor Joseph Hanna.

Attention Church Treasurers

The Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee has a new treasurer—Rev. Robert Keplinger, 516 Country Club Ln., Ashland, OH 44805. Please send contributions for this fund to him.



Bloomington Church presents living portrayal of Christ's crucifixion on Good Friday afternoon

Valrico, Fla. — *Paid in Full*, a living portrayal of the crucifixion of Christ, was presented on Good Friday afternoon from 3 to 6 o'clock on the lawn of the Bloomington Brethren Church.

Similar to a live nativity scene, *Paid in Full* was a portrayal by the members of the Bloomington congregation of the various characters associated with the crucifixion of Christ on the cross. Portrayed were the two thieves, mourners, Roman guards, and, of course, the Lord Jesus Himself.

The portrayal included no spoken parts or dramatic reenactments. Rather, the scene was a living placard displayed alongside the major thoroughfare on which the church property is located. Passing traffic slowed during the three-hour portrayal, as drivers and passengers craned their necks to get a closer look.

Dozens of cars pulled into the church parking area, and a number of people got out of their cars to meditate, pray, and observe, while sitting in an area designated for such purposes. Each visitor who stopped was given a brochure with a description of the biblical message of the crucifixion and a folder with an invitation to the church's Easter Sunday services.

Paid in Full was conceived by Butch Humphrey, a member of the church leadership, who came up with the idea when the outreach

committee was seeking for a way to impact the community with the Gospel message at Easter time. "Since we are a small church, we can't put on the kind of big musical or dramatic production so common during the Easter season," said Pastor Glenn Rininger. "But we were looking for something that we could do, and the Lord really brought together all the components we needed. Gloria Keller made all the costumes; several of the men constructed the crosses; and a local church of another denomination even loaned us props that we would never have been able to afford by ourselves!"

"Every single response we had from those who stopped by was positive," Pastor Rininger added, "and several area pastors were so impressed that they asked us to let them know if we were not going to do it next year, because if we didn't, they wanted to!"

The Bloomington Church looks forward to presenting *Paid in Full* again next year, with the hope that the presentation can be made more effective by adding music and more people. This year more than 1,000 door hangers were distributed in the days before Good Friday, inviting people to the presentation and giving them information about the church. In this area, too, the church hopes to do more next year.

— reported by Pastor Glenn Rininger



Bonnie's wheelchair fund goes well over the top

Goshen, Ind. — On Sunday evening, May 3, the Goshen First Brethren Church held a fund-raising dinner to culminate its efforts to raise funds for a new wheelchair for Bonnie Munson. (See "New Wheels for Bonnie Munson" on the back page of the March 1998 *EVANGELIST*.)

The kitchen committee, assisted by other women of the church, prepared a lasagna dinner that was enjoyed by all. A free-will offering was received, which totaled \$1,500.

This brought the total amount received that far from churches and



Goshen pastor Rev. Donald Rowser presents a check to Bonnie Munson for her new wheelchair.

from many individuals across the Brethren denomination to \$14,800. Since that date an additional \$10,415 has been received, bringing the total to \$25,215. This is more than enough to cover the \$24,000 approximate cost of the wheelchair. The extra money will go into a fund for batteries and for maintenance of the chair. (continued at right)

Six-thousand pound baby born singing praises of its Father in Rockingham County, Virginia

Birth Announcement

A new church was born at 10:00 a.m., May 17, 1998, in the Cross Keys area of Rockingham County, Virginia. It included 40 siblings—both male and female—weighing a total of approximate 6,000 pounds. It was born singing joyfully to its Father—God—and was christened "Cross Keys Worship Center." The newborn is the offspring of the call of God and abundant prayer, and is the result of much prenatal planning. Although still an infant, it shines with Spirit-filled life. With proper care and nurture, it has excellent prospects for life and growth.

Port Republic, Va. — The new Brethren church announced above is being planted by Pastor Pat Velanzon and a core group of 12-13 people. Rev. Velanzon was pastor of the Bethlehem Brethren Church in Harrisonburg, Va., for 17 years before leaving that post on April 26 of this year.

Services of the Cross Keys Worship Center are held in the Cross Keys-Mill Creek Ruritan Hall. Pastor Velanzon describes the worship as contemporary, though he's not comfortable with that description. He's a diehard rock and roll fan, but the first service—by popular demand—featured bluegrass gospel music.

Rev. Donald Rowser, pastor of the Goshen congregation, expressed his delight at the response of Brethren to Bonnie's need for a new and better wheelchair. "The overwhelming response to [this need] proves again that our God can do the impossible," he said. [✠]

The focus of the new church, according to Pastor Velanzon, is three-fold: to worship God, to know Christ, and to serve others in His name. Anyone in the congregation is free to plan or do anything that will provide opportunities for doing one or more of these things. The church is developing three primary ministries: **worship**, to plan and coordinate the Sunday morning worship services; **youth**, to develop ministry for children and teens; and **out-reach**, to promote evangelism and provide communication.

The congregation plans to participate in the LIFE (Living In Faithful Evangelism) process beginning in September, and has set October 4 as the date for its Grand Opening. The group is looking forward to growing



The 40 people who attended the first worship service of the Cross Keys Worship Center ranged in age from 5 to 75 and came dressed in everything from khaki shorts to suit and tie.

together and being a vital part of its community. Goals for numbers of conversions and average attendance have already been set for one, three, and five years. And when average attendance reaches 100, the congregation plans to plant a new church by sending out 12 to 15 people who will grow again.

— reported by Kathy Velanzon, with portions taken from an article by Luanne Austin that appeared in the Harrisonburg, Va., *News-Record*.

*If God sends us on stony paths,
He will provide us with strong shoes.*

— Alexander Maclaren



Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith Chair in Church Planting founded at the seminary

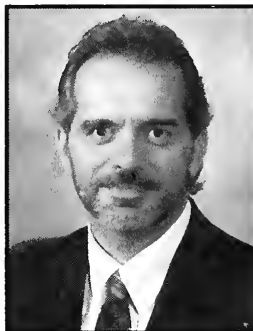
Ashland, Ohio — Missionary Ministries of The Brethren Church and Ashland Theological Seminary have joined efforts to establish an endowed faculty position ("chair") in Church Planting at the seminary.

The idea for this position originated with Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church. He shared the idea with Dr. Fred Finks, President of the seminary, and they began seeking funding to support the position. The Executive Board of The Brethren Church endorsed the effort, and the chair was formally approved.

An international search for a person to fill the position was launched. Earlier this year, the search committee—comprised of representatives from both the seminary and The Brethren Church—selected Dr. Terry Wardle as the first occupant of the Chair in Church Planting.

Dr. Wardle comes to Ashland from Spring Meadow Retreat Center, a ministry of renewal and restoration

for Christian leaders, which he founded in 1996. Prior to that, he served as the founding pastor of Risen King Community Church, a congregation that began in August 1989 with seven adults and now numbers more than 900 and has planted two daughter congregations. *Dr. Terry Wardle*



He has also been a college and seminary professor and administrator, and has served as a consultant for various agencies and organizations. His teaching has focused on evangelism, preaching, and church growth.

The new Chair in Church Planting is named in honor of the late **Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith**. A 1934 graduate of the seminary, Dr. Klingensmith taught at ATS for many years, and he also served from 1941 to 1945 as head of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church.

J. Ray Klingensmith had a long and service-filled life in The Brethren Church. He pastored Brethren churches in Ohio, Indiana, and Washington, D.C. He served as director of the Missionary Board during the critical period following the split with the Grace Brethren.

In 1956 he was appointed profes-

sor and department chair of the Religion Department at Ashland College. He taught Bible at both the college and the seminary. He loved to teach, and even after his retirement he continued to teach on a volunteer basis as long as he was physically able to do so.

In the citation naming the Chair in Church Planting in honor of Dr. J. Ray Klingensmith, Dr. Finks said: "J. Ray was a preacher, a pastor, a teacher, a leader, and a statesman within The Brethren Church. He has impacted more lives than anyone could imagine. . . . It is a fitting tribute to name this Chair in memory of one who means so much to The Brethren Church, Ashland University, and Ashland Theological Seminary."

The Church Planting department will offer several options for those interested in church planting: a master's degree with a concentration in church planting, seminars, and intensive week-long courses on planting churches. For more information, write to the seminary at 910 Center St., Ashland, OH 44805. [†]

Recording artist Rich Rader to travel to Macau in August

Mansfield, Ohio — Brethren recording artist Rich Rader, founder of Vision Ministries, will be taking his 1998 "Worship Time" tour to the southeast Asian territory of Macau in August (10-31).

Macau, a Portuguese territory scheduled to revert to China in 1999, is Vision Ministries' first international ministry opportunity. Rader will be sharing God's Word through music, preaching, and teaching in the area of worship.

Since his graduation from Ashland Theological Seminary in 1995, Rader has traveled more than 125,000 miles throughout the United States

playing more than 400 concerts in churches, camps, conferences, and nursing homes. He has appeared in a number of Brethren churches.

He currently has three albums released with Vision Records, *Jesus Is the One* (1995), *Truth* (1997), and *Grandpa's Favorite Hymns* (1998). In addition, he will be one of fifteen Christian artists included on a new compilation CD scheduled for release this month (June) on the Broken Records label.

Rich and his wife Tiffany (Flickenger; from the Lanark, Ill., Brethren Church) are both 1993 graduates of Ashland University, are members of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Columbus, Ohio, and live in Ontario, Ohio. [†]

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The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 120, No. 7

A newsletter for Brethren people

July/August 1998

Renewal: How will we know when it happens?

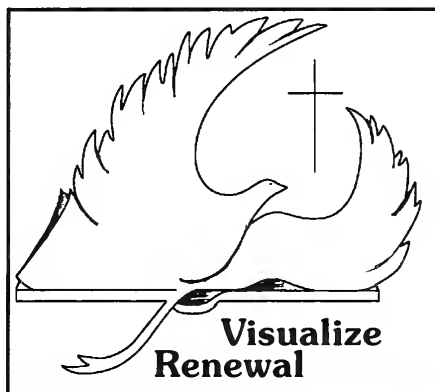
WE HAVE BEEN TALKING A lot this year in The Brethren Church about renewal. "The Brethren Church is in need of renewal," said Dr. Emanuel Sandberg, Executive Director of The Brethren Church, in an article in the January 1998 issue of the *EVANGELIST*. He went on to give evidence of that need.

To meet that need, General Conference in August has been planned to help facilitate renewal. The theme of the Conference is "Visualize Renewal," and each day of the week will focus on areas of our lives that need to be renewed—heart, family relationships, spirit, heart for the lost, and the church. Again quoting Dr. Sandberg, "The Conference is being planned as a Brethren celebration of God's power to revive, restore, and redirect His people."

A pertinent question

With all this emphasis on renewal, it might be pertinent to ask, "How will we know when renewal happens?" Charles H Spurgeon, one of the greatest English preachers of the nineteenth century, can help us with an answer. Spurgeon described several characteristics of genuine *revival*. I think we could as easily substitute the word *renewal*. According to Spurgeon, revival/renewal is characterized by:

1. An uncommon eagerness to hear the Word of God, and an unusual readiness to speak and be spoken to about the interests of the soul.
2. An unusual sense of sin and personal unworthiness, together with a readiness to unite in prayer for pardon and holiness.
3. A deep appreciation of the aton-



General Conference theme logo

- ing sacrifice of Christ, and a joyful acceptance of Him as personal Savior.
4. Personal consecration and covenanting with God in the Spirit of grace, accompanied by reformation of life and manner.
5. Great delight in secret and social prayer, and in all the ordinances of God.
6. An uncommon sense of the nearness of God, with joy in the Holy Ghost, and abounding thanksgiving and praise.
7. Increased fervor of love and deepening sense of unity among Christians.
8. An extraordinary concern for the salvation of others, and boldness in testifying to the grace of God in His Son.

It is obvious that for Spurgeon revival (renewal) is more than a response to an altar call; more than an evening (or week) of excitement and emotion.

Reread Spurgeon's list and spend some time thinking about it. Notice in particular the following: *an uncommon eagerness to hear the Word*

of God; personal consecration; reformation of life and manner; great delight in prayer and in all the ordinances of God; increased fervor of love; deepening sense of unity among Christians; and particularly, an extraordinary concern for the salvation of others, and boldness in testifying to the grace of God in His Son.

These are not emotions. These are life changes. It is these kinds of experiences that we hope and pray will begin at this General Conference and then sweep across The Brethren Church. And it can happen!

Come to Conference

Attend this Conference if you can, even if you have never attended a General Conference before. Come, praying that God will send renewal. If you can't come for the whole week, try to come for a day or two.

If you can't attend, then pray for the Conference. Make a commitment to spend time each day during Conference week in earnest prayer that God will pour out His Spirit to revive, restore, and redirect His people. Pray that renewal will begin at Conference and that it will sweep across The Brethren Church. And pray as well that God will prepare **your** heart to be renewed. [†]

— Editor Dick Winfield

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Brethren Impact Through Prayer Week

Sunday, September 20, through Sunday, September 27

THIS FALL The Brethren Church will inaugurate an annual event to be known as **Brethren Impact Through Prayer Week**. The purpose of this annual week of prayer will be to focus our petitions on behalf of our Brethren church planters and the churches they are planting.

Significant dates

The dates for this year's powerful week of prayer are September 20 through September 27. These dates are significant in two ways: First, they coincide with the beginning of the church-planting season, which begins in September and runs through Easter. Second, they precede the birth of two Brethren churches—Grace Community Church in Winchester, Virginia (September 27), and Rock Springs Community Church in Vista, California (October 4).

The National Office will provide effective resources for all congregations for this crucial week, to encourage member participation. These resources will include kick-off and closing messages, an eight-day outline of prayer requests, worship resources, and supportive biblical references.

As Brethren we are committed to serving Christ and each other. Therefore, we must mobilize every church to lift up those individuals and families who have committed themselves to this Christ-ordained ministry (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Our church plants are strategically placed in areas of need that pre-

sent many challenges. These areas host pockets of lost individuals who, in increasing numbers, are finding a false sense of security in the hands of Satan himself. Church planters seek out these deceived individuals, who are in need of spiritual awakening. They continuously extend Christ's love to these abused children, youth, and adults, who may question the very existence of God, His love, and the benefits of obeying Him. They do this while at the same time fighting the battle which takes place in the spiritual realm, where powerful opposition exists to this ministry field and its workers.

While carrying out this ministry of seeking the lost, church planters must also tend to the needs of their own families. This includes maintaining a healthy marriage and a loving environment for the family. The church-planter's home is where Satan hits the hardest, as he attempts to disable Christ's effective witnesses.

Effectual prayer

Brothers and sisters, our church planters, as well as those they seek to reach, can benefit by our prayers. God's Word illustrates for us that God can be petitioned to intervene and effect changes in the world. As sovereign Lord and Creator of the universe, He gives us the opportunity to participate in and to have an impact upon His divine agenda (see Gen. 18:22–33, Num. 14:12–20; Acts 12:5–10).

We are urged by Jesus to pray with unity, intensity, and watchfulness (Matt. 18:19, 26:41; Mk. 13:33, 14:38). Paul interceded for his friends in Rome and for fellow Christians in both Ephesus and Colosse (Rom. 1:9, 10; Eph. 3:14ff.; Col. 1:9ff.). When Paul was compelled by the Holy Spirit to travel to Jerusalem, where he knew he would meet with many hardships, the Ephesian elders assembled to pray for him (Acts 20:36–38). And in Tyre, all the disciples, their wives, and their children gathered in prayer for Paul before he continued his journey (Acts 21:5–6).

United in spirit

As Brethren, let us likewise unite in spirit and send forth our church planters with genuine, vigilant prayer. Let us raise up our eight church plants with eight days of persistent prayer. Let us recall how Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you truly love me . . . ?" "Do you truly love me?" "Do you love me?" Jesus' response to Peter's affirmative answers was, "Feed my lambs," "Take care of my sheep," and "Feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:15–17). We must do the same.

Please join us in this week of unified prayer for our church planters. Contact Ginny Hoyt at The Brethren Church National Office for resource materials, which will be available at General Conference. [†]

—Karen Frado
Ashland, Ohio

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Pontius' Puddle



You Can't Rest in the Nest

By Dan Lawson

I RECENTLY LEARNED that when a mother eagle builds her nest, she deliberately selects thorns, bits of broken glass, and other sharp objects and carefully places them in the bottom of the nest. Then she plucks soft down feathers from her own breast and lines the nest with these. After the nest has been cushioned with these feathers, she will lay her eggs.

As the eggs hatch, both the mother and the father eagle bring food and care for the baby eagles. When the eaglets are old enough to fly, the mother eagle removes the soft down feathers from the bottom of the nest. This exposes the thorns and broken bits of glass, making it very painful for the little eagles to rest in the nest. As a result, they begin perching on the edge of the nest.

Learning to fly

Then the mother eagle does something that could be considered very cruel. She flies over and knocks an eaglet out of the nest. The little eagle plunges recklessly toward the rocks below, screeching and flapping its wings wildly. At the last possible moment, the mother eagle swoops down under the baby, catches it on her back, and carries it back to the safety of the nest. This frightening experience is repeated over and over again until the baby eagle eventually learns to fly.

To the casual observer, the behavior of the mother eagle may seem abusive. She knows, however, that if she allows the eaglets to rest in the nest, they will die. Eagles were created to soar in the heavens. Without the ability to fly, they would starve to death. What first appears as cruel is actually for the baby eagles' good.

In Deuteronomy 32:10-12 we

learn that God used the same kind of process to prepare Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery. God used various circumstances to force Moses out of Egypt and into Midian, where he wondered in the wilderness, homeless and alone except for the watchful eye of the Lord.

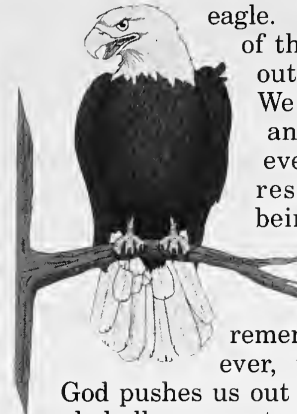
"We must remember that when God pushes us out of the nest and challenges us to grow, He is also watching over us, just as the mother eagle watches over her baby's fall."

This process may have seemed harsh to Moses. Like the baby eagle plummeting toward the rocks below, there were times, I'm sure, when Moses feared for his life. Nevertheless, throughout this whole process God was watching over Moses, just as the mother eagle watches the frenzied fall of her young.

There is a lesson to be learned here. While the baby eagle is plummeting toward the rocks, the mother eagle is watching nearby. In fact, you might say that her entire attention is focused on the plight of that eaglet. But the baby eagle feels alone, frightened, and totally out of control. As the baby eagle struggles madly to stop its fall, it is completely unaware of the watchful eye of its mother.

Letting go of the nest

It has been my observation that people are not much different. When God is trying to prepare us for some work that He would have us do, we feel much like the baby



eagle. We are out of the nest and out of control. We are fearful and perhaps even a little resentful at being pushed out of the nest. We must

remember, however, that when

God pushes us out of the nest and challenges us to grow, He is also watching over us, just as the mother eagle watches over her baby's fall. We may not be aware of His watchful eye, but He is always there, ready to rush in at the last moment and catch us on His pinions. He will carefully restore us to the safety of the nest. But if we have not yet learned how to fly, He will not let us rest in the nest. He will continue to challenge us until we have learned to soar.

When we are left to ourselves, it is our human nature to be complacent, perhaps even a little apathetic. We want to rest in the nest. We prefer not to get out of our comfort zone. We like the familiar, and we get more than a little perturbed when we have to make changes.

Living by faith

But when we live this way, we are not living by faith. And when we do not live by faith, Hebrews 11:6 tells us that it is impossible for us to please God. We can never accomplish great things for God when we are resting in the nest.

Moses did great and mighty things and is still remembered as a great man of God. None of this would have happened had he not been forced out of the luxury of Pharaoh's palace and into the wilderness. What will it take to get you out of the nest and doing things for God? [†]

Dr. Lawson is pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Indiana. This article is one of a series in which Dr. Lawson applies biblical truth to our personal lives.



Domestic Violence: What does it include?

Part two of a three-part series
by Morven Baker

WHEN WE HEAR the words “domestic violence,” we tend to think that they mean physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, and other hurtful physical acts. They do, but they also have a broader definition.

The “Wheel of Violence”

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project of Duluth, Minnesota, has composed a “Wheel of Violence” to illustrate the wider scope that violence includes (*see below*). The Duluth Project believes that basic to every act of violence is a misuse of power and control, so these words appear at the center of the wheel. Around this center hub are eight pie-shaped wedges, with each wedge representing some form of domestic abuse. Following are illustrations of the kinds of behavior represented by these pie pieces in the “Wheel of Violence.”

Using intimidation refers to making one’s spouse afraid by using looks, actions, or gestures; by smashing things; by destroying her property; by abusing pets; and by displaying weapons.

Using emotional abuse includes putting her down; making her feel bad about herself; calling her names;

making her think she’s crazy; playing mind games; humiliating her; or making her feel guilty.

Using isolation is accomplished by controlling what she does, whom she sees and talks to, what she reads, and where she goes; by limiting her outside involvement; and by using jealousy to justify control.

Minimizing, denying and blaming include such behaviors as making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously; saying the abuse didn’t happen; shifting responsibility for abusive behavior by saying that she caused it. According to this definition, those who minimize the pain a woman feels when she discloses the abuse she has suffered are also abusing her.

Using children refers to making a woman feel guilty about her children; using the children to relay messages; using visitation of the children as a means to harass her; and threatening to take the children away.

Using male privilege occurs when a man treats his wife like a servant; when he makes all the big decisions; when he acts like the master of the castle; and when he is the one who defines both his and his wife’s roles.

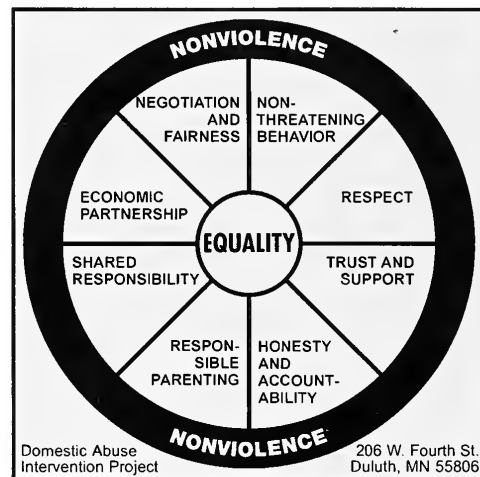
Using economic abuse includes such behaviors as preventing her from getting or keeping a job; making her ask for money; giving her an allowance; taking her money; not letting her know about or have access to the family income; and forbidding her from having her own bank account.

Using coercion and threats refers to making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her; threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, or to report her to welfare; making her drop

charges; or making her do things that are illegal.

The “Wheel of Nonviolence”

The Duluth Project has a contrasting wheel—a “Wheel of Nonviolence.” At the center of this wheel is the word equality, representing the basis of the nonviolent relationship. Around the center are attitudes and behaviors that grow out of this relationship of equality. Notice the contrast between these and the ones on the “Wheel of Violence.”



Non-threatening behavior involves talking and acting in such a way that one’s wife feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things.

Respect is shown by listening to her nonjudgmentally; by being emotionally affirming and understanding; and by valuing her opinions.

Trust and support includes supporting her goals in life; and respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities, and opinions.

Honesty and accountability refers to accepting responsibility for oneself; not blaming others for one’s mistakes; acknowledging past use of violence; admitting when one is wrong; and communicating openly and truthfully.

Responsible parenting entails sharing parental responsibilities and being a positive, non-violent role model for the children.

Shared responsibility requires mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work and making family decisions together.

Economic partnership includes making money decisions together
(continued on page 6)





Profile of a Church-Planting Couple

By Reilly R. Smith

WHAT SHOULD a Brethren church-planting couple look like? What kind of personality should they have? What spiritual characteristics should they possess?

One of the goals of the five-year strategic plan for Brethren Impact Church Planting is to develop a profile for Brethren church-planting couples. It's a difficult task. Both Brethren and church planters are very diverse. God uses a wide variety of people to accomplish His purposes, even when He deploys them in the same job.

I like to compare the apostles Peter, Paul, and John to illustrate my point. Their gifts and temperaments were quite different. Yet all three were apostles. All three were effective. So it is with church planters. And with Brethren!

What it means to be Brethren

Brethren Impact church planters must first of all be Brethren. They need not be "born" Brethren. Many who were born into our church are **not** in fact Brethren. Brethren are believers who have a living relationship with Jesus Christ based on the Bible and who produce spiritual fruit and follow the practices of the early church.

Brethren believe that the church is a community of love and faith in which believers inspire, encourage, and empower one another to live godly lives. True members of the community have been born again into a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. These members also maintain an active relationship with the Word of God—the outer Word (the Bible), and the inner Word (the Holy Spirit), both of which bear testimony to the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

This relationship produces a profound faith in the truth of the Bible and the obedience that accompanies such faith. This faith produces spiritual fruit (Jn. 15:1–8), which also has an inner and an outer manifestation. The inner dimension is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). The outer dimension is a Spirit-empowered testimony for Christ (Acts 1:8).

Profile of a Church-Planting Couple (In brief)

Personal relationship
with Christ

Living relationship
with other believers

Acts on
the word

Notable
character traits

Teachings of the
early church

Members of the Brethren community also follow the godly examples of saints in the early church. Three-fold communion and trine immersion baptism are the most obvious manifestations of this to many who were "born" Brethren. But the early Brethren recognized that following the practices of the early church meant living lives fully devoted to God, to one another, and to one's neighbors in this world (Matt. 22:37–40 & 28:18–20; Jn. 13:34–35, 15:17, & 20:21; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45–49; and Acts 1:8 & 2:42–47).

Brethren Impact church planters must be committed to the unity of the body of Christ in all these things. They must also possess a flexible—

but identifiable—mix of character, calling, personality traits, abilities, and spiritual gifts.

Godly character is essential. All church leaders should bear the character of Christ (the fruit of the Spirit). So a Brethren Impact church-planting couple must be growing Christians, born again and bearing fruit. Their integrity must be above reproach (1 Tim. 3:1–7 and Tit. 1:7–9).

Calling is also essential. Any Christian involved in ministry must believe that he or she is called to work in that particular ministry. The need for that sense of call is even more important for a church-planting couple. They must know that God has called them to start a new church. Church planting is so demanding that, at times, their sense of call is the only thing that keeps them going.

Brethren Impact church-planting couples must be people-persons. Their personalities must be warm and friendly. Their demeanor must be inviting. Outgoing, gregarious people have an advantage, but people who are not naturally outgoing can start churches if they are intentionally friendly with people.

Church planting couples with pioneering or entrepreneurial personalities also have an advantage. But they must have a heart for lost people. And they must be self-starters who don't need continual prodding.

Skills and abilities

Brethren Impact church planters also need a variety of natural and developed skills and abilities. They must be visionary, able to see the big picture—the future and the path to the future. They must be good organizers, because they will be creating a new entity out of chaos. In the *old days* church planting was called "organizing a new church." Church planters must know how to gather resources—people, money, and other needs. They must also know how to build and guide a ministry team.

Brethren Impact church-planting couples must know and use their spiritual gifts. They must be able to

(continued on next page)

identify and employ their own gifts before they can help others use theirs. No particular gift mix is *required* for a specific church planter, but a broad mix of gifts is essential for church planting. The church-planting couple must help people learn to use their gifts for building up the body of Christ (Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:7, and Eph. 4:16). The key is for the church-planting couple to set an example by openly using their gifts as they teach others to use theirs. Then together they will all function as a holy priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:5-10).

Paul Becker, president of Dynamic Church Planting International, describes a number of characteristics of a church-planting couple in *Dynamic Church Planting—A Complete Handbook*. The first 13 characteristics he describes were discov-

Thirteen Essential Qualities for a Churchplanter

1. Has a vision capacity
2. Is intrinsically motivated
3. Creates ownership of ministry
4. Relates to the unchurched
5. Manages family well
6. Builds relationships effectively
7. Is committed to church growth
8. Is responsive to the community
9. Utilizes giftedness of others
10. Is flexible and adaptable
11. Builds group cohesiveness
12. Is resilient
13. Exercises faith

From *Dynamic Church Planting: A Complete Handbook* by Paul Becker, pp. 36-38. In the *Handbook*, each of these "qualities" is followed by several points of definition.

ered by Dr. Charles Ridley through his research of successful church

planters. These 13 characteristics are the backbone of most church-planter assessment interviews in the North American church today. (See box at left.)

Paul Becker views these 13 characteristics as essential. He also recognizes another dozen as desirable and helpful. He further suggests characteristics which are important for a church planter's spouse to possess. The complete list is found on pages 36-41 of the *Complete Handbook*. It is not necessary to possess all of the characteristics listed, but it is important that the church planting couple possess enough of them to ensure a successful start and that they know how to build a team that will fill in the "gaps." [†]

Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.

Domestic Violence

(continued from page 4)

and making sure that both partners benefit from financial arrangements.

Negotiation and fairness means seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict; accepting change; being willing to compromise; and listening to her side of the story.

Tell me, which wheel represents the way that you want to be treated? Which wheel did Jesus model?

The above explanation of violent and nonviolent relationships may make perfect sense to you. Unfortunately, this may not be the case with a battered woman. Abused women have often lived with so much manipulation that they have become confused and self-blaming. They are caught up in what the experts term "the cycle of abuse," and they feel that they have no option but to continue in this abusive relationship.

The cycle, like all romantic relationships, begins with the "honeymoon stage." This is when the man is loving and thoughtful, treating her gently, bringing her flowers. But then things start to get a little "ouchy." He begins to yell at her or the children, blaming them for things that are not

their responsibility. He may start to throw things or to withhold necessary items. He begins to intimidate. His level of rage escalates until he begins to get physically violent.

At this point, he sees what he has done, feels remorse, and begs to be forgiven. He brings his wife flowers, says kind things to her; becomes thoughtful. He has returned to the "honeymoon stage."

Sooner or later, however, the cycle of abuse begins again. It may take only days, or it may be weeks, months, or even years. It depends on the family and their situation. The cycle is exacerbated when alcohol or drugs are involved.

As the cycle continues and the tension builds, some women actually provoke the physical abuse. For them, the tension of living under the threat of violence is actually worse than the physical pain itself. And they know that once the violence is over, the "honeymoon" will follow. [†]

Mrs. Baker is a licensed professional clinical counselor associated with Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates in Ashland, Ohio.

The "Wheel of Violence" and the "Wheel of Nonviolence" are used with permission of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, Minn.

Thank You

From Bonnie Munson

Since 1951 I have been very aware of the love and support of the beautiful Brethren people. You have supported and blessed my family in so many ways.

Ten years ago many of you helped me buy my first motorized wheelchair. And then last year the women of the W.M.S. helped me customize that chair, which specifically made it possible for me to stay independent in my apartment.

And now as that chair ages and becomes unreliable, you have made it possible for me to buy a wonderful new wheelchair that will not only provide my mobility, but which will also recline so I can rest in it as well. This fund will also help provide for cushions, batteries, and future repairs. It is hard to find words to express the depth of my gratitude for your generosity. A heart-felt thank you. I will always be grateful.

Bonnie Munson

General Conference Opportunities

Elections

One council member at-large will be elected to each of the two Ministries Councils during elections at Conference in August. Other members of the councils whose terms expire this year are elected by the districts they represent. Moderator John Shultz was elected last year for a three-year term, so no moderator will be elected this year.

The **Congregational Ministries Council** will present the following nominees for its at-large member:

Tim Garner, pastor of the First Brethren Church of Elkhart, Ind.

Karen Best, staff-member's wife at Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Ky. Her husband, Randy, is the assistant administrator. Mrs. Best was the California District representative to the Congregational Ministries Council before she and her husband moved to Lost Creek.

The **Missionary Ministries Council** will present the following nominees for its at-large member:

Bill Skeldon, pastor of the Oak Hill and Gatewood Brethren congregations in West Virginia and a former member of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church.

Bev Baker, secretary of the South Bend, Ind., First Brethren Church, where her husband, Larry, is the pastor. She, too, is a former member of the Missionary Board.

Jim Kirkendall, pastor of the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church in Levittown, Pa. He served for a time as the Pennsylvania District representative to the Missionary Ministries Council.

Conference delegates will also have an opportunity to present nominees for these two positions. Before doing so, however, they must contact the persons they wish to nominate to make certain that they are willing to serve and that they meet the qualifications and accept the responsibilities of council representatives. Nominees should be selected from the best leaders in the church, whether pastors or lay people.

Qualifications: Members of the Ministries Councils must be grow-

ing Christians, members in good standing of a local Brethren church, and in doctrinal agreement with *A Centennial Statement of The Brethren Church*. They need to be leaders with potential who are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and dedicated to the local, district, and national ministries of The Brethren Church. They must be good communicators, able to work well with others, and interested and involved in ministry related to the council on which they serve.

Responsibilities: Members of the Ministries Councils are required to prepare for, attend, and actively participate in the meetings of the councils. They must support the decisions of the Ministries Councils and the Executive Board and help raise funds for the programs of the councils. They are to serve as ambassadors for denominational ministries and promote unity between the district and national organizations by maintaining communication and building good relationships between the two. They need to attend General and District Conferences and complete their assigned tasks in a timely manner.

In addition to the two council members, elections will be held for all members of the Nominating, Conference Membership, and Ways and Means Committees. One member will be elected to the Rules and Organization Committee, one to the Church Polity Committee, and one trustee for the Retirement Fund, Inc. Delegates will have the opportunity to make nominations for any of these positions.

Conference Offerings

Each evening at General Conference an offering is taken for some special project. In the past, some people who were unable to attend Conference have expressed an interest in contributing to these offerings. Following are this year's projects.

Monday's offering will supplement the travel subsidy fund of the General Conference to be held in Estes Park, Colorado, in the year 2000. Many more people will be

traveling a long distance to attend that Conference, thus a larger fund will be needed.

Tuesday's offering will help fund a training retreat for mentors participating in the Brethren Leadership Initiative. All Brethren will benefit as a model is developed that enables local churches to help other local churches reach their full potential.

Wednesday's offering will help expand the library of the South American Theological Seminary in Argentina. If funds exceed the immediate needs, the remainder will be used to build a scholarship fund for Brethren students in Argentina.

Thursday's offering will help our church in Lima, Peru, expand its outgrown facilities. Currently, about 45 people jam into several rooms for worship services.

If you would like to contribute to one or more of these projects, send your offering to Conference with a delegate from your church. Or send it directly to The Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. If you send amounts for more than one project, please send a separate check for each project. Make a notation on the memo line or attach a note indicating the specific General Conference project for which it is to be used. **Make all checks payable to The Brethren Church, Inc.** [†]

Women's Luncheon

Jan Pletcher will be the speaker for the Women's Luncheon during General Conference. Mrs. Pletcher is a faculty member in Communication Arts at Taylor University, Upland, Ind. Having experienced adverse times, including the paralysis of her son when he was two years old, Mrs. Pletcher has developed a ministry of hope and encouragement. She also speaks on friendships and stress.

A trio from the College Corner Brethren Church W.M.S. will present special music.

The luncheon will be Wednesday, August 5, at 12:30 p.m. in the Ashland University Convocation Center. The cost is \$8.00, and reservations are required.

Introducing *Faith Partners* for Women

Good Day, Sisters!

God is always doing something new. Praise His Name! We would like to share with you one of the things He is doing with us. Our Lord has given us a vision for a way Brethren women can serve each other, and we would like to invite you to participate.

We are introducing **Faith Partners**. This will be a network of contacts and services provided to all Christians, and especially to the women of The Brethren Church.

Our vision is to encourage and equip Christians to vigorously pursue spiritual growth and to take up the ministries to which they are called. It is also our vision to support women who are already in ministry. We are earnestly seeking God's will in these things, and we want to hear from you about what you need. We hope God will excite the imagination and creative spirit of us all as we join together.

We encourage you to think about your relationship with God and how He is working in your life. Then we urge you to share that with others for the blessing of us all.

Faith Partners will be primarily a network through which Christians can serve and inspire other Christians. Through this network, individuals, new local groups, established groups like W.M.S., and professionals offering services can unite to build each other up in Christ.

Faith Partners is considering such services as:

- a computerized data base to match gifts and skills with needs and ministries across the country
- workshops, seminars, and speakers for conferences and retreats
- assistance in developing new ministries, such as a health ministry
- prayer partners and prayer warrior networks
- mentoring and class curricula
- newsletters for women in ministry
- reviews of books and materials
- anything else you can think of that would help you.

In addition, if you have something to offer to other Christians, we want

to include you in our network, so that they can find you.

We need your input! Below is a checklist of some of the services we would like to provide. **Please check** the ones that you think would be valuable to *you* or to *your group*. Also, please add any other ideas you have of services that could be provided through such a network. **Thanks for your support!**

Checklist

A newsletter offering support, encouragement, and assistance to:

- ☐ Pastor's wives
- ☐ Women's groups
- ☐ Others _____
- ☐ I am willing to serve in this way _____

Prayer teams

- ☐ I would like a prayer partner
- ☐ I would be interested in serving as a prayer warrior
- ☐ Our group would like to participate
- ☐ A network for companionship, friendship, and support for those in ministry
- ☐ Other needs or ideas _____

Ministry Development

- ☐ An idea exchange; "one-stop shopping" for ideas that work
- ☐ Assistance in developing new ministries from others who have started similar ones, such as:
 - ☐ Health ministry
 - ☐ Lay counseling ministry
 - ☐ Other _____
- ☐ A database to match gifts and skills to needs across the country
- ☐ Training to enable me to feel more comfortable and confident in starting a new ministry

Study Materials

- ☐ Reviews by women of Christian books—content and usefulness

- ☐ Materials written by professions to address specific topics in my area of need
- ☐ I am interested in writing reviews
- ☐ I could write study materials
- ☐ I would like good materials on: _____

- ☐ Other needs or ideas _____

Worship and retreat aids

- ☐ Drama or dance teams
- ☐ Retreat formats and curricula
- ☐ Music teams
- ☐ Circulation for my plays, music, etc.
- ☐ Time at national and local conferences for women's groups to share ideas, needs, resources
- ☐ Other ideas or needs _____

Professional workshops and retreats on:

- ☐ Dealing with stress, anxiety, depression
- ☐ Marriage, parenting
- ☐ Health concerns
- ☐ Prayer, meditation, spiritual disciplines
- ☐ Forgiving, conflict, reconciliation
- ☐ Life as a pastor's wife
- ☐ Dying, grieving, and consoling
- ☐ Communication, Christian assertiveness
- ☐ Seminary-level curricula on Bible topics
- ☐ Experiencing God's love
- ☐ Women in ministry
- ☐ Other _____

Missions

- ☐ Needs exchange for missions in cooperation with W.M.S.
- ☐ Directory for women in ministry
- ☐ We would like a "sister church" to support and exchange with
- ☐ Other needs or ideas _____

Internet

- ☐ I would utilize a Website to the **Faith Partners** network
- ☐ I would like to serve this ministry with my computer skills

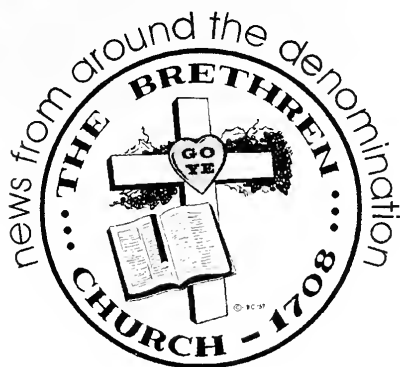
My name _____
 Address _____
 _____ Phone _____

My group, if any (W.M.S., Women's Bible study, support group, etc.) _____

My church _____

- ☐ I would like to serve as a contact person for my group or church

**Send completed form to: FAITH PARTNERS, c/o Cheryl Schmiedt,
 20687 S. Manteca Rd., Manteca, CA 95337-9710**



New Christian opportunities opening up in today's world

Ashland, Ohio — Momentous movements of Christianity are taking place in our world today, according to Dr. Joseph R. Shultz, former president of Ashland University and Theological Seminary. Dr. Shultz now serves as a board member for International Institute for Christian Studies (IICS), an organization that recruits Christian faculty to teach in universities and colleges in countries, especially post-Communist nations, around the world.

Dr. Shultz reports that Sergei Kiriyyenko, the new Prime Minister of Russia, attended an M.B.A. class with an IICS professor, who shared the Gospel. Kiriyyenko accepted what he heard and thanked God. "Please pray for him," Dr. Shultz said.

A school of psychology in St. Petersburg, Russia, wants IICS to take over its program. The head of the school, who is a grandson of the Russian physiologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, is considering the claims of Christ.

In China, educators have asked IICS to assist in the first revision of teacher training curriculum since the Communists took over in 1949.

In Hanoi, officials at Vietnam National University have welcomed a Christian professor and are asking for more.

In Maiduguri, Nigeria, a city that is strongly Muslim, university officials invited IICS to open a department of Christian studies.

Dr. Shultz notes that there are *many* calls for Christian professors. For years, Christians prayed for the fall of Communism. Now we must rise to the opportunities the Holy Spirit is providing in the world today. [✚]

Former Brethren Chaplain Dan DeVeney receives a Doctor of Ministry degree

Manteca, Calif. — Rev. Dan DeVeney, pastor of the Northgate Community Brethren Church in Manteca, received a Doctor of Ministry degree May 23 from Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia. His work for the degree focused on marriage and family life counseling.

Dr. DeVeney began the Doctor of Ministry program at Eastern Baptist in September 1995, while serving as a chaplain in the U.S. Army. He officially retired from the military on November 1, 1997, following 16 years as a chaplain plus four years earlier as an enlisted soldier. During his 16 years as chaplain, he served as pastor of eight military congregations.

He notes that while he served as chaplain, he, his wife Ann, and their three children (all three of whom are now adults), changed military addresses about every three years, as they moved from one post to another. At least one of those addresses was in Germany, in addition to various bases in the U.S.

Dr. DeVeney says that one of his special memories of the chaplaincy was "offering threefold Communion to believers who had never experienced the sweetness of that special time." He recalls, "Some were apprehensive at the beginning, but to a person, they were powerfully moved as they sensed God's presence."

Explaining his focus on marriage and family life for his degree, Dr. DeVeney says, "I have a passion to



Dr. Dan and Ann DeVeney at the graduation party the Northgate Church gave them when they returned from Dan's graduation.

see families function at their best I know I received more from the program, personally than I will ever be able to give to others, but I'm going to try to balance the scales as best I can."

About his ministry at Northgate Community Brethren Church he says, "Our intentions are to continue marching, as they say in the Army. The ministry in Manteca is good because God is here. We share the Good News of Jesus from a church with deep roots—they go all the way back to Calvary." [✚]

Doyle Paul a state finalist for Teacher of Year honor

Berlin, Pa. — Doyle Paul, a member of the Berlin Brethren Church, has been named as one of 12 finalists for the 1999 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year award.

Mr. Paul was selected by receiving the top score for nominees from Region III in the state. He was nominated by John Krupper, assistant high school principal of the Berlin School, where Mr. Paul teaches.

Mr. Paul is the agriculture education instructor at Berlin. He is also

adviser to the Berlin Brothersvalley FFA and Young Farmers chapters.

Mr. Paul is a deacon in the Berlin Brethren Church and serves as a Sunday school teacher. He is also involved in the community in numerous organizations. He is president of both the Berlin Volunteer Fire Department and the Berlin Brothersvalley Community Fair.

The 1999 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year will not be announced until October 15. But whether or not Mr. Paul is so named, to be one of 12 finalists in the state for this title is of itself a great honor. [✚]



Pastor Chuck Wolfinbarger named Citizen of the Year

Franklin, Ohio — Chuck Wolfinbarger, co-pastor of the Vineyard Community (Brethren) Church near Franklin was honored recently by the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce as Citizen of the Year.

Wolfinbarger co-pastors Vineyard Community Church with Mike Sove. The church was formed earlier this year when Vineyard Christian Fellowship, which Wolfinbarger started in 1988, merged with Northview Brethren Life Church, which Sove pastored.

Vineyard Christian Fellowship operates a summer lunch program in Franklin. The program provides free lunches for needy children twice a week. The church also started a free store called the Vineyard Downtown. Families that receive clothing or other items do some community work in exchange. In addition, church members clean up the streets in Franklin every year after the city's Riverdays Festival.

Wolfinbarger also does group counseling at several schools for boys in need of adult leadership. And he serves as a volunteer junior high and high school track coach.

"Jesus said to love God and love your neighbor," Wolfinbarger told chamber members when he received the award. "That's all we're trying to do, and we believe if you do that, you can make a difference." [✝]

Sandbergs and Finkses Visit China

Ashland, Ohio — Dr. Emanuel and Ann Sandberg and Dr. Fred and Holly Finks made a two-week visit to China during June to explore open doors for the gospel. They traveled to Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hong Kong and visited seminaries in Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing. They had a good trip and returned to Ashland safely on June 30. A report of their visit will be included in an upcoming issue of the EVANGELIST.

Hammond Avenue Church breaks ground on June 7 for \$500,000 Family Life Center

Waterloo, Iowa — A few years back, two churches in Waterloo—the First Brethren Church and the City Church of the Brethren—were faced with similar problems. Neither church had enough. The City Church did not have enough people for its building, and the First Brethren Church did not have enough building for its people.

The two congregations solved their problems in 1992 by merging to form the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church. The combined congregation sold the First Brethren Church building and meets in the building that had belonged to the City Church of the Brethren.

Now the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church again has a problem of not enough: not enough space for all its ministries. The congregation is solving this problem by adding a \$500,000 expansion to its facility.

The main part of the new structure will be a Family Life Center. It will house a multipurpose room that can be used for basketball, volleyball, and other recreational activities, but which can also be converted into a dining room that will seat 200 people for a meal. The building



Senior Pastor Ronald L. Waters guides the plow while the congregation pulls as together they break ground for a new addition to the Hammond Avenue Church building.

will also contain a new kitchen (twice the size of the church's present one) and an elevator. Both will better serve the needs of the congregation now and in the future.

Ground was broken for the new building on June 7,

following the morning worship service. Church members Don Catchpool and Leroy Lamb turned the first shovelfuls of dirt; then the whole congregation got involved. Senior Pastor Ronald L. Waters grasped the handles of a John Deere walk-behind plow, and the rest of the congregation grabbed hold of

two long ropes. At the pastor's word, all pulled together to break the ground.

The construction crew started on the project the next day. The addition is scheduled for a December completion.

The congregation has shown great enthusiasm for the project from the very beginning. Even the vote to spend more than \$20,000 on blueprints was 100 percent. "God's hand of blessing has truly been on this project," said Associate Pastor Bill Shipman, "and we look to the future for great things to happen as we all pull together."

— reported by Rev. Bill Shipman

*Yesterday cannot be recalled,
Tomorrow cannot be assured,
Today only is yours.
And if you lose today, you may
have lost it forever.*

— Jeremy Taylor

World Relief News

Washington, D.C. — Because of its initiatives in bringing churches together to respond to the impact of welfare reform, World Relief, the international assistance arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, was recently named as a new member of the Welfare to Work Coalition to Sustain Success.

The Welfare to Work Coalition to Sustain Success is a network of volunteer and faith-based organiza-

tions that help families successfully move off welfare and into permanent jobs. The coalition meets regularly to exchange ideas and study successful program models.

"Only by our actions can we earn the right to be heard and participate in the full transformation of lives," said Clive Calver, president of World Relief. "Living out Christianity requires a radical lifestyle that means getting involved in the hurts of



The Brethren Church received a special award from World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals during the association's annual convention in Orlando, Fla., in March. Dr. Clive Calver (r.), president of World Relief, presented the "Open Hands Award" to Dr. Emanuel Sandberg, Executive Director of The Brethren Church. The award recognizes the commitment of The Brethren Church to help the poor in the name of Christ, as evidenced by our support of the work of World Relief in 1997. Thanks to the partnership of The Brethren Church, in 1997 thousands of people received emergency help in the war-torn areas of Rwanda, Congo, Liberia, and Bosnia. Hundreds of thousands more in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States were able to work their way out of grinding poverty through our partnership. "By working together, we can make a difference and change this world for Jesus Christ," declared Dr. Calver.

Those attending General Conference in August will have an opportunity to see the award we Brethren received from World Relief. They will also have an opportunity to see and hear Dr. Calver, when he speaks during the World Relief Soup Luncheon on Thursday and during the Thursday evening worship service. And, of course, they will have a chance to see and hear Dr. Buzz Sandberg during the week as well.



others while boldly proclaiming the good news of saving faith in Jesus."

"The needs are enormous," Dr. Calver continued, "and only by working together, across denominational and racial divides can the church rise to this historic challenge and make a measurable difference in the lives of the poor in America."

In several communities across the country, World Relief is bringing churches together to address the needs of families impacted by welfare reform. In Chicago, churches are helping homeless families become self-supporting again, while in Miami, 90 churches are networking to provide food to 900 senior citizens who lost access to food stamps.

In Buffalo, N.Y., and Marion, Ind., World Relief is helping churches create a program model that assists families moving from welfare to work. The churches are developing training materials to help churches work together to overcome racial and denominational barriers that can keep them from effectively ministering to the poor.

Relief work in Sudan

On another part of our globe, World Relief has responded to the cry of church leaders in southern Sudan and is working with a consortium of Christian aid agencies to provide emergency assistance to an estimated 930,000 displaced people in this African country. These people have been forced to leave their homes by the long-running civil war in this land.

World Relief is providing seeds and tools to the displaced people so that they can provide for themselves as quickly as possible.

"The church in Sudan needs to know that their brothers and sisters in America have not forgotten them and are even willing to suffer with them as the Sudanese continue to cling to their faith in Jesus, who brings them eternal salvation," said Dr. Calver.

[C]



Doing something about immorality in the media

On Television

New York, N.Y. — Are you fed up with the violence, vulgarity, and gratuitous sex on television, and wish you could do something about it? If so, Morality in Media, a national interfaith organization, has published a handbook that can help you.

TV: The World's Greatest Mind-Bender is a 48-page handbook for parents, grandparents, and others who are deeply concerned about much of the programming on television. "More than ever, TV viewers need the 'know-how' at their finger tips to fight back," said Robert W. Peters, president of Morality in Media. "That's why we wrote our *Mind-Bender* handbook—to collect and organize this 'know-how' into one publication and make it the tool concerned Americans can use for this job."

The handbook, which was recently completely updated from its first edition in 1992—includes:

- How to make indecency complaints to the FCC.
- A summary of the laws against indecency and obscenity on broadcasting, cablecasting, and satellite TV.
- A list of the top TV advertisers and their products.
- Surveys and studies of TV content (sex, vulgarity, and violence).
- Addresses and phone numbers of key TV executives.
- Statistics on TV viewing habits.
- Evidence of TV's negative effects on children, adults, and families.
- Answers to cliché arguments routinely used by the defenders of TV trash.
- Results of opinion surveys on what Americans think of TV.

Copies of *TV: The World's Greatest Mind-Bender* are available for \$5.00 each from Morality in Media,

Four Brethren among ATS graduates in May

Ashland, Ohio — Four Brethren were among the 150 graduates who received degrees May 30 from Ashland Theological Seminary.

John Philip Allison received the Master of Divinity degree (with honors). Allison is currently serving as pastor of the Brighton Congregational Church near Wellington, Ohio, which he began serving while attending the seminary.

Rev. Eugene Gregory Bell

received the Doctor of Ministries degree. Dr. Bell is director of an inner-city ministry located in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Rev. Rickey Allen Bolden received the Doctor of Ministries degree. Dr. Bolden is pastor of Southeast Christian Fellowship, a Brethren congregation in Washington, D.C.

Douglas F. Cunningham received the Master of Arts degree. Cunningham, from the Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church, is now active in the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. [†]

475 Riverside Dr., Suite 239, New York, NY 10115 (ph. 212-870-3222).

On the Internet

Charlotte, N.C. — Pornography and other unacceptable content on the Internet is a serious problem. Parents and teachers want children to learn to use the Internet, but they are concerned about the unwholesome content so readily available.

One way of dealing with this is by purchasing and installing on the family computer a software program that blocks access to objectionable material. But such software packages can be difficult to install, expensive to maintain, and, above all, have proven to be easily disabled or circumvented—even by children.

A Christian Internet service called **711.NET** is offering a solution: **Rated-G Online**, an Internet service provider that keeps inappropriate or offensive content from ever reaching your computer.

Rated-G Online provides complete access to Internet content except to sites which fall into one of the following categories: nudity (except classical art or medical sites); pornography and other sites labeled expressly for adults; depiction or description of sexual acts; violence; drug use; vulgarities; racial, ethnic, or other inappropriate discrimination; crime, tastelessness; and high-risk chat or newsgroup sites. Since thousands of new web sites come online weekly on the Internet, Rated-G Online's database filters are monitored and updated *daily*.

Rated-G Online currently offers

direct dial-up services with local phone numbers in more than 180 metropolitan areas nationwide, with up to 1,000 to be available by the end of 1998. The flat-rate charge for Internet access and e-mail service is \$24.95 per month. More information and online sign-up is available at the Rated-G Online web site (www.rated-g.com) or by calling 1-888-711-6381. [†]

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Vol. 120, No. 8

A newsletter for Brethren people

September 1998

Impressions of General Conference by those who were there

TREMENDOUS Conference!! Best I've ever attended," Fred Brandon wrote.

"This was the most inspirational Conference I've attended," Brenda Colijn said.

"Wow! What a spiritual Conference! We need more like this one!" Dee Benshoff exclaimed.

"Excellent Conference! Life-changing experiences!" Cheryl Schmiedt declared.

"I'm still resting in the glory of this Conference! In all our years we don't ever recall this preciousness of His Holy Spirit's presence," Ann DeVeny testified.

These are just a few of many such comments received about General Conference, which was held last month (August 3-7). The comments came on response forms filled out at Conference and in e-mail "Reflections on General Conference" solicited after the event.

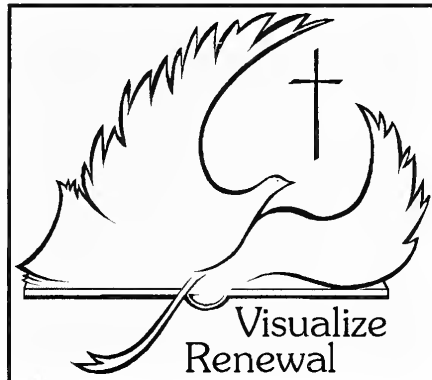
There was widespread agreement among those who responded that this was indeed a great Conference. This does not mean that there were no negative comments about some aspects of the week. But even those who criticized some facet of the Conference generally agreed that it was a great week overall.

All speakers a blessing

Five main speakers—Terry Wardle, Bruce Wilkinson, Richard Parrott, Clive Calver, and David West brought messages during the week. With this many speakers, it is not unusual for one or more of them not to measure up to the rest. But this was not the case at this Conference.

"All the speakers were excellent," Lynn Mercer remarked. Bill Musser

exclaimed, "Every speaker this year was outstanding!!!" But perhaps Judy Eckerley said it best: "The speakers were the best we have had in many years. Usually one or two bless me, but all were just top notch."



Many people said that they were *particularly* blessed by one or two or even three of the speakers. But some mentioned some speakers and others mentioned other speakers, so that in sum every speaker was a special blessing to someone. Also mentioned among those who brought special blessings were Ronald W. Waters, who presented a workshop, and Steve Saint and two "Auca" (Huaorani) Indians, who made a missions presentation.

Last year many Brethren left Conference with speaker Hal Seed's prayer on their lips: "God, I don't ask You for much; I just ask that You give me Your heart for the lost." This year they went home with speaker Terry Wardle's words in their hearts: "God is nuts about you!"

Why the great Conference?

Why was this such a great Conference? A lot of extra time, effort, and planning went into it. A theme for

the week, "Visualize Renewal," was selected and broken down into daily emphases—renewal of heart, relationships, spirit, zeal for the lost (missions), and the church. Speakers were carefully selected, to address each of these themes.

Time spent in prayer

But perhaps more important than the planning was the time spent in prayer for this Conference. In fact, prayer was *part of the planning*. As Conference approached, more and more people were invited to participate in this prayer preparation. This culminated in a call for Brethren across the denomination to join in a three-day fast (July 27-29), during which they would pray for the Conference—specifically for the speakers, for a spirit of repentance and renewal, for unity among God's people, for God's voice to be clearly heard, and for "visualized renewal."

James Bingle raised a pertinent question about the prayer and fasting. He wrote, "The Holy Spirit, indeed, has enabled us to hear and see the truth. Is it possible that the call for prayer and fasting before Conference was the catalyst?" Sue Mer-

(continued on next page)

Inside this issue

This entire issue, except for page 11—which highlights the Brethren Youth In Christ program—is devoted to coverage of General Conference. Regular features, including recent news from around the denomination, will return next month.

The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue

cer affirmed that it was: "It was a dynamic week. What was different? I think a three-day fast for the Conference." Ann DeVeney said it more forcefully: "I believe the fasting and prayer that preceded the conference was important in ushering in His strong presence." And for Emery Hurd, there was little doubt: "I am convinced that our time of fasting and prayer prior to Conference was the major reason for this 'fresh wind' of the Spirit at Conference."

But what about renewal?

The goal of this Conference was that Brethren who came would experience renewal from God. Did it happen? *Many people thought so.*

Ken Solomon wrote, "There is ample evidence that our prayers for God's blessing on this conference were amply answered and that renewal is taking place."

His opinion was shared by Roger Stogsdill, who said, "I was very much uplifted by General Conference this year. . . . I do feel renewed. From the responses of the people who came with me from this church, they feel renewed as well." He also commented that during Conference week, "I heard people all over the place talking about the renewal being experienced."

Jim Boyd saw among Brethren at Conference "more openness to change" and a "willingness to try new things" as evidence of "vision renewal."

One person whom God renewed is John Garrett. He wrote, "Coming home from Conference renewed my commitment to be a man of prayer, seeking Him in all things . . . ; [to have] a repentant heart (especially in the area of pride); and [to] continually strive to KNOW Christ; to

think like Him; to talk like Him; to love like Him; to be compassionate like Him; to hate sin like Him; to forgive like Him; to be as committed to the Gospel as He was to bring it!" And he adds, "O Lord, bring revival—and let it begin with me!"

While not using the word renewal, Fred Finks talks about it when he says, "I was touched in some personal and private areas of my life that have set me on a course of reflection, prayer, and study. I trust that this will not [be] just a passing moment of truth for me, but will be ingrained in the way I think and live." His second sentence reminds us all that renewal must be more than "a passing moment."

Larry Baker makes this more explicit when he says that the long-term indication of renewal is to "see if things change in the lives of congregations and other individuals; i.e., is the renewal transferred or shared with others. We've got [to] pass it on, and not just be content with some warm, fuzzy feelings."

Will the renewal spread?

His comments remind us that the goal for this Conference was not only that renewal would occur among those who attended, but that this renewal would also spread throughout The Brethren Church. Opinions about whether or not this will happen ranged from pessimistic, through hopeful, to optimistic.

Jim Thomas had his doubts. He wrote, "Personally I gained a lot and have experienced renewal in every area of my life, but I doubt that that will translate back to the districts or to many local churches."

Larry Baker was more hopeful: "If the renewed leadership can successfully take this back to the churches and the districts, it could filter down to the person in the pew."

Michael Woods, who served outside The Brethren Church the past two years, believes this renewal has already begun. He wrote, "Two or three times during this week's Conference I turned to someone near me and asked, 'Where am I?' The spiritual environment has changed drastically in two years. This from someone who was away and came back home and found a new home in its place."

He went on to say, "I sincerely believe God is doing something unpredictably wonderful in our church. . . . Specifically, I believe God is calling each of us to a passionate love relationship with Him, expressed so well by Dr. Wardle on Monday night. The renewal in our denomination is here. And it's happening in us. As the old quote goes, 'Everybody wants to change the world . . . nobody wants to change themselves.' Contrary to that, God IS changing us."

Sharing Mike Woods conviction that renewal has begun is Jill Stone. She wrote, "I believe that renewal is happening in The Brethren Church. I know that it has begun in my life." Following Terry Wardle's message on Monday night, in which he said that God loves us 'passionately,' she responded by "saying to God that I am going to be more 'passionate' in my relationship with Him. My heart has been full of Jesus ever since."

She continues: "I had a dream the next day I saw a flower-lined walkway leading up to a beautiful, ornate door. I was told in my dream that we are now at the place that we have been waiting for. I believe this was a true message from God. All we have to do is open this door and allow God into our churches, and He is waiting to bless us. God is ready to pour out His blessing on our church!"

The Brethren are ready

She concludes: "I believe that the Brethren are ready. We have prayed and fasted in advance, and I believe that God is moving. We are going to see great things because we are seeking God and opening the door for Him to come!" [†]

The articles on the following pages attempt to capture some of the essence of Conference in an effort to spread the spirit of renewal. Audio cassettes are also available of the messages by Richard Parrott, Clive Calver, and David West, the missions presentation by Steve Saint and the Huaorani Indians, and the church growth workshop by Terry Wardle (\$4.00 each from the National Office). Let's make use of these resources to keep alive the "fresh wind of the Spirit." And let us continue to pray for renewal in our lives and throughout The Brethren Church.

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Emanuel Sandberg makes “Visualize Renewal” personal

TO PUT the Conference theme, *Visualize Renewal*, squarely before the Brethren attending General Conference, Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg, Executive Director of The Brethren Church, zeroed in on this theme in an address he made during the opening celebration on Monday evening. His comments preceded a message by Dr. Terry Wardle (see next page).

Personal testimony

Dr. Sandberg began by witnessing to God's work in his own life during the past year. He shared two personal experiences, a “mountain-top” and a “valley” experience.

The mountain-top experience related to a commission he received from God 45 years ago and which he has kept in his heart ever since—to help bring God's word to God's children in China. In June, Dr. Sandberg, his wife Ann, and Dr. Fred Finks, president of Ashland Theological Seminary, and his wife Holly, spent two weeks in China. They visited five major cities, three seminaries, and talked to Christian leaders, teachers, and students.

As a result, three students from China will enter Ashland Theological Seminary this fall. These students will study at Ashland and then go back to China as seminary teachers or as pastors. The hope is that these are the first of many more students from China who will follow in their footsteps.

The valley experience was sickness in the form of prostate cancer, that resulted in surgery. But even this had its blessings. Before he went to the Cleveland Clinic for surgery, Dr. Sandberg was anointed in a special service led by Dr. Finks at Ashland Theological Seminary.

The surgery went well, and three weeks later, when Dr. Sandberg returned to the clinic to get the pathology report, he was given “good news.” There was no evidence that the cancer had spread, and



Dr. Buzz and Ann Sandberg

therefore no further treatment would be necessary. He was also given “bad news”—that the pathology analysis of the prostate gland showed no evidence of cancer either, despite the fact that seven of nine earlier biopsies had shown cancer in a relatively advanced state.

The doctor was mystified. This had never happened to him before. He was also apprehensive. “You probably think we should not have done the surgery.” To which Mrs. Sandberg replied, “Dr. _____, it is a miracle, and it was God's

answer to hundreds of prayers.”

Having shared how God had worked in his own life, Dr. Sandberg then called upon Brethren to prepare for God to work in their lives during the week ahead—a week of renewal. He first asked that they pray that their lives would be changed—“Invite God in; ask forgiveness for your transgressions; and pray that God will renew your life.”

He then asked that they consider five areas of their lives that would be the focus of the week—“your heart, your personal relationships, your spirit, your zeal to reach the lost, and your church.” Referring to each of these five areas in turn, he asked that they inventory the present state of that area of their lives, both the pluses and the minuses. Then he asked that they visualize what this area of their life would be like if it were totally renewed, all hurts, all shortcomings, all problems gone. He also suggested that this should be a process that they continue throughout the week.

“Take inventory of your life”

“I am asking you to take inventory of your life and to *visualize* the *renewal* of your life. We are here to celebrate our relationship with one another and with God and to take the first steps in renewing our lives,” he said as he concluded. “Ask God for a renewed life—to be ‘born again’ again! If you do, after this week your life will never be the same.” [†]

Brethren at Conference were blessed by the presence of Señor José Rivero (l.), president of The Brethren Church in Argentina, and of Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri and their daughter Jana. The Ferreris, also from the Argentine



Brethren Church, serve as Brethren missionaries in Medellín, Colombia.

“God is nuts about you,” Terry Wardle tells Conference

DR. TERRY WARDLE* began his message during the Monday evening service of General Conference by telling about helping to build a house. The walls and rafters were up, and he and other carpenters were working on the roof, when suddenly the structure shifted and began to collapse.

As he and the other carpenters hurried down from the roof, they saw many things that needed fixed—crooked walls, a twisted staircase, sections that had fallen down. But it wasn't until they got to the basement that they found the problem. There they discovered that part of the foundation had collapsed. Other things need to be fixed, but the foundation was the problem.

Repair the foundation

So it is in our Christian lives and in the church. Other things need to be fixed, but first of all we need to repair the foundation. “We need to be attentive to the foundational issue of our passion for Christ,” Dr. Wardle said.

The starting point of our love for Christ is knowing His love for us. We need to be able to testify to the passionate love of God for us. As we become aware of how much He loves us, that love ignites in us a furious love for Him.

Dr. Wardle told about a nun whose priest told her to spend some time in solitude. When she returned, the priest asked her what God had said to her. “He said He’s nuts about

me,” she replied. The priest sent her back for another period of solitude. When she came back again, the priest again asked her what God had said. She answered, “He told me that He’s really nuts about me!”



Following his message, Dr. Terry Wardle took time out from chatting with the Brethren to pose with his wife, Cheryl (at his left), and their three children (l. to r.), Cara, Aaron, and Emily.

“Is the foundation of your life secure because you know that God is passionate about you?” Dr. Wardle asked. “And are you passionate for Him?”

Information or transformation

In John 17:3, Jesus prayed that His followers might “know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” We need to *know Him*, not just about Him, Dr. Wardle declared. This is a knowledge that brings about transformation. “Our churches are *over informed* and *under transformed*,” he said. We give out *information* and pass over *transformation*.

“Never place your identity in anything you can lose,” Dr. Wardle warned. “Find your identity in God’s love. That you can never lose.”

“But don’t other problems need to be addressed?” he asked. “Yes, but be passionate about God, and all the

rest will come out of that,” he answered.

The key to Jesus’ ministry was that He did what He saw the Father doing (Jn. 5:19). “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does” (v. 20). When we are convinced that God loves us and we passionately love Him in return, we too will seek to do the works that He is doing. Devotion and service go together. Jesus said that if we abide in Him (devotion), we will bring forth much fruit (service) (Jn. 15:5).

Dr. Wardle reported that surveys of people around the world have shown that they are seeking two basic things: true transcendence and true relationships. If we know that we are furiously loved by God and if we furiously love Him in return, we have the answer to both these needs.

Dr. Wardle concluded his message by suggesting a simple prayer, “Lord, transform my heart.” He said, “If we’d ask for it, He’d give it.” He invited all who wanted that kind of transformation in their lives to come to the platform area following his message. The front of the auditorium was crowded with those who responded. [†]

Dr. Wardle also led a workshop about church planting on Friday morning of Conference. It focused not on methods, but on “Spiritual Realities and Church Planting.”

Dr. Wardle stressed the importance of spiritual formation (being conformed to Christ’s image), spiritual direction (discovering God’s leading), spiritual discernment (doing what the Father is doing), spiritual warfare (being armed for the battle), and spiritual empowerment (being Spirit-filled and empowered) to church planting.

What he said applies not only to church planting, but to Christian ministry in general. The audio cassette of his workshop (*available from the National Office*) would be of benefit to any Christian, not just those involved in church planting.

**Dr. Wardle is associate professor of church planting at Ashland Theological Seminary. Before joining the seminary faculty in June, he was director for two years of a retreat center for renewal and restoration of Christian leaders, which he founded, and prior to that he served as a church planter.*

Bruce Wilkinson calls Christians to “move to the first chair”

THE THREE CHAIRS: *A Legacy to Live By* was the title of Dr. Bruce Wilkinson’s* message during the Tuesday evening worship service of General Conference. The three chairs of the title represent three generations of people and three kinds of relationships to the Lord.

The three generations are: chair 1—a generation of people who know the Lord, see His mighty deeds, and follow Him with all their hearts; chair 2—the next generation, who know *about* the Lord, hear *about* His mighty deeds, and follow Him half-heartedly; and chair 3—the third generation, who don’t know the Lord, are not taught about His mighty deeds, and don’t follow Him at all.

He illustrated the three generations from the history of Israel in the days of Joshua and following, as described in Judges 2:7, 10–12.

The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua [generation 1] and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. . . . After that whole generation [generation 2] had been gathered to their fathers, another generation [generation 3] grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt.

Dr. Wilkinson also illustrated it from Christian experience. A father and mother are deeply committed to the Lord and serve Him with all their hearts. Their children go to church, learn about the Lord, and serve him half-heartedly. Their children, in turn (the third generation), seeing their parents’ hypocrisy and their lack of commitment, leave the church and do not follow the Lord.

He defined the relationship of the three generations to God as: chair

**Dr. Wilkinson is founder and president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries.*



Dr. Wilkinson stands in front of the three chairs he used to illustrate his message.

1—commitment; sold out to God; chair 2—compromise; living for God and self; chair 3—conflict; in conflict with God and living totally for self.

Dr. Wilkinson directed the rest of

Dr. Wilkinson talks about breakthroughs in marriage

IN ADDITION to his Tuesday evening message, Dr. Wilkinson presented a workshop on Wednesday morning about marriage. He spoke about three areas of marriage—relationship, role, and responsibility—with the stated goal that everyone in the audience would experience a breakthrough in at least one of these areas.

Relationship. His first challenge was that husbands and wives experience a breakthrough in loyalty to their relationship—complete loyalty at all times. Noting with alarm that recent statistics indicate that more Christians are getting divorces than non-Christians, he said that marriages break down first in loyalty. Examples of disloyalty include having an emotional or physical affair with another person, looking upon another person with lust, and being more devoted to one’s

his message primarily to those in the audience living in chair 2. He appealed to them to move from chair 2 to chair 1 by making an all-out commitment to God. He said that second-chair Christians are carnal Christians—born-again people who live like they’re not.

First-chair Christians see God’s mighty works in their lives, and God speaks to them. But second-chair Christians often say their prayers bounce off the ceiling. “They don’t bounce off the ceiling,” Dr. Wilkinson said. “They bounce off the fact that you aren’t sold out to God.”

Second-chair Christians are described in Revelation 3:15, 16 as neither hot nor cold. Jesus says to them, “So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” But Dr. Wilkinson offered hope, for later in the passage Jesus says, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.”

Dr. Wilkinson concluded his message by calling on second-generation Christians to become sold out to God. “Jesus is calling us to give up the second chair and move to the first,” he said. The front of the auditorium was filled with those who responded to his invitation. [†]

work than to one’s spouse. Anything but complete loyalty is sin.

Role. His second challenge was that husbands and wives experience a breakthrough in achieving their biblical roles in marriage. According to Ephesians 5:23, the role of the husband is to be the head of the wife. That means that he should lead; should take responsibility. The role of the wife is to come alongside her husband and help him.

Responsibility. His third challenge was that husbands and wives experience a breakthrough in living out their responsibilities in marriage. The responsibility of the husband is to love his wife with unconditional love. The responsibility of the wife is to submit to her husband by practicing an attitude of respect.

“What happens when all three breakthroughs take place in both partners?” Dr. Wilkinson asked. “Every dream you ever had about your marriage will be realized,” he promised. [†]

Richard Parrott looks at ways to clear the clutter from your soul

DR. RICHARD PARROTT* began his message on Wednesday evening of Conference with a garage sale, a garage sale in his soul. After revealing some of the clutter that resides in his soul and the price of giving it up, he said, "I want to talk about taking care of your soul."



Dr. Richard Parrott—having a garage sale in his soul.

"Clutter—your life is full of it; my life is full of it," he continued. Clutter touches every aspect of our lives, including our souls—our sense of who we are at the middle of our being. "There has to be another way besides clutter," he said.

There are two approaches to life: the way of clutter and the way of simplicity. "I want to suggest for you tonight a bridge to move out of one and into the other," he said.

He found that bridge in the Gospel of Mark, chapter one, which he said could be called "a day in the life of Jesus." It was a very demanding day, and by its end

**Dr. Parrott, a pastor for 23 years, now serves as director of the doctoral studies program at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

everyone was worn out. Nevertheless, Jesus refused to be a victim to the clutter and the clamor of His world. He did so by maintaining the "margins" of His life.

How do we put margins in our lives? Dr. Parrott suggested three ways from Mark chapter one.

First, we need an evening in the house with Jesus (verse 32). We need a safe place, a quiet time, with special friends (for where two or three are gathered in His name, Jesus is there).

In such a time and place, the illnesses in our souls and the demons that haunt us can come to the surface and we can begin to deal with them. Many of our

demons can't be handled alone. "You need a night in the house with Jesus, where you can talk it out,

pray it through, and be free," Dr. Parrott said.

Second, we need a morning in the hills (verse 35). We must spend time alone in prayer, just as Jesus did. The clutter of our souls cuts us off from who we are. Prayer provides us the opportunity to remember. At such times of prayer, God says to our souls, "You are not in control; you were never meant to be in control. I am in control." And that's liberating! During these time of prayer God also whispers, "It's not what you accomplish; it's you I love," Dr. Parrott said. "I need that morning in the hills to reestablish my identity in Jesus Christ," he added.

Third, we also need a new day on the road (verse 39). After an evening with Jesus and a morning in the hills, the demands of life continue. Schedules have to be kept; decisions have to be made. But the difference is the Pacesetter. Jesus accomplished an amazing amount in His three years on earth, but you never get the impression that His life was a mad dash to the cross. We need to pray, "Lord, be my Pacesetter."

Dr. Parrott concluded his message by telling the story of his own years of ministry and how he had to learn these truths in his own life. He then gave pastors and church staff the "privilege and the permission" to take care of their own souls by coming forward for a time of prayer. Many responded. [†]

Gift Announced

During the Wednesday evening worship service at General Conference, Dr. Fred Finks, president of Ashland Theological Seminary (r.), announced that Mrs. Frances Smetzer (cen.) has made a gift of one million dollars to the seminary to establish the Ted and Frances Smetzer Christian Counseling Center.

This is Mrs. Smetzer's third major gift to the seminary. She donated \$100,000 for the Smetzer Auditorium in the new Gerber Academic Center, dedicated in 1997, and she then provided a grand piano for that auditorium. Shown with Mrs. Smetzer and Dr. Finks are her son, also named Ted (l.), and Dr. Leroy Solomon, Director of Development for the Seminary.



The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



September-October 1998

Volume 12, Number 1

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

As I write this, we are in the middle of Conference week. It is always so good to see old friends and meet those who will become new friends.

Summer has gone all too fast for me. I have been in the hospital and back and forth from the Cleveland Clinic for several tests most of the summer. I have not had much time to sit on my front porch swing, which I have always enjoyed.

We moved to a new home August 1 just before Conference, and that was very exciting. My new address is 702 Smith Road in Ashland (the phone number is the same). Everything is on one floor. It's great!

My sons, Glenn and Jim, and their wives, Sarah and Susie, and my daughter, Barbie, were wonderful. They put everything in place in my kitchen and worked on the living room as well. They were such a big help! I don't know what Jim and I would have done without them. Our sons and a group from our Canton Trinity Brethren Church moved all the heavy "stuff," and the church provided food for the hungry movers.

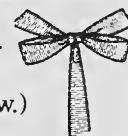
Well, enough of moving. In August I will go to my 45th high school class reunion. That really makes me feel old! I am sure it will be fun. Can you imagine what it will be like when we go to heaven? Now that will really be a **reunion**—seeing loved ones and friends! I don't think we will recognize them as we knew them here on earth, but we will know

(continued on page 4)

OBEDIENCE

Devotions given by Dee Grindle,
Wabash, at the Indiana District W.M.S. Conference, June 1998

(The W.M.S. theme was Being Obedient Women.
The first letter of each word spells BOW,
and the symbol of the conference was a ribbon bow.)



Being obedient — How can we be obedient to our Father? You will find a key to that question in the first part of John 14:15, "If you love Me . . ." If we but love Jesus, obedience will come naturally. We will want to obey Him. The more we grow to love Him and trust Him, the easier it becomes to obey Him.

Jesus told us in Mark 12:30 that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. A few weeks ago our pastor reminded us that this was every portion of our being. I understood this to mean that every ounce of our energy should go into loving God over everything else. When we turn back to Proverbs 3:5, we read "Trust in the Lord your God with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." We need to trust in God in our daily walk.

Obedying Him would be our desire if we first love and trust Him totally. But how? How do we love Him and trust Him with all our being?

When we first meet the Lord, a spark is ignited, a flame begins to burn. We need to keep that flame burning. Our family vacations are usually a wilderness camping trip. Our favorite activity is sitting around a campfire singing camp songs and telling stories, while watching the fire fairies dance around the flames. For us to continue to enjoy the campfire, it has to be fed. We have to keep piling wood on the coals for the flames to feed on, or the fire will die out. Just as that

campfire needs to be fed, the flame of our love for Jesus needs to be fed.

How do we feed those love flames for Jesus? What is on the menu to build a fire so strong it will meld our souls into obedience? The first meal of the day should be a breakfast of prayer, not just any old dry cereal prayer or pop tart chat. We are breaking a fast. This meal has to be a hungry-man, biscuits and gravy, sausage and eggs-type breakfast. One of those stick-to-your-stomach-grits type of breakfast. We should take our time over this meal, savoring the aroma of God's cup of peace and love as we converse with Him across the breakfast table of prayer.

As the day moves along and we hurry on our way, we need to take time for lunch. Since we have already been filled with the fulfilling nourishment of prayer, we now need something that is low-fat and yet high energy to boost us through our day. What is better than a nice huge healthy helping of God's Word. This is a definite must for everyone's diet. Just sink your teeth right into a big tasty helping of Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs, or maybe one of the Gospels or Revelation. Fill yourself to overflowing with Galatians or Ephesians or one of the other 56 selections on the buffet. As you continue to feed on His Word, you will most surely lose weight: the weight of stress, burdens, grief, and sadness. You will even tone up muscles: the muscles of Joy, Faith, and Kindness, Self-control, and Patience.

(continued on page 4)

HIGHLIGHTS OF WMS CONFERENCE

Each year I write about the outstanding features of Conference: the inspiration of the messages and the blessings we received from worship, listening, and visiting. This year excelled! The theme of General Conference was "Visualize Renewal," which focused on the aspects of heart, relationships, spirit, zeal for the lost, and the church.

In the W.M.S. meetings we, too, followed the same theme. The program cover, designed by David and Penny Knouff (Louisville Bible), depicted a smiling light bulb obviously turned on and shining with the "Thought for the Week — Visualize Renewal." In her devotions Tuesday, Judy Eckerley (Mishawaka) presented Visualize Restoration (Psalm 23:3). Judy's devotions will be printed in a future issue of the *Newsletter*.

Wednesday's luncheon featured Jan Pletcher from Taylor University, Upland, IN, who used her son's prayer, "Jesus, I want to walk" as the basis of her talk. At age 2, David, Jan's son, was in a near fatal accident and is paralyzed from the waist down. When he was 4, David prayed this prayer and sobbed. Though he is confined to a wheelchair, David, now 16, "walks" proudly and humbly as a servant of Jesus. He bears his testimony for Jesus wherever he is.

Jan likened David to the physically disabled person whose healing by Jesus is told in John 5. "Tell them Who healed you," Jesus said, and we are to bear the same message. We are healed from spiritual, emotional, and physical illnesses.

Jan cautioned us not to tiptoe or stumble, but to powerwalk. Take or carry your friend to Jesus; pick up another's burden; be a prayer warrior.

The table centerpieces, made by the Goshen ladies, were miniature birdhouses set in a floral garden. The Hagerstown ladies designed the luncheon program, complete with a bird and flowers, complementing the centerpiece.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The ladies from Pennsylvania presented the **memorial service** on Tuesday. Jane Yoder (Valley) read I Peter 2:5 and likened our sisters now with the Lord as living stones. We need to use them as the firm foundation on which we build. Barbara Hagerich (Vinc) used large building blocks to illustrate Sisters in Christ. While Marsha Nies (Masontown) played, Jane read the names of the 26 deceased members and thanked God for their lives.



Members of the Park Street Joy Circle received the **project offering** after the luncheon. On each table was a small open container decorated in blue and white stripes, the national Argentine colors, which represented the South American Theological Seminary (SATS). Judi Gentle reminded us of the re-establishment of the Seminary. This is the cooperative effort of the U.S. Brethren Church, Ashland Theological Seminary, and the Argentine Brethren Church.

The containers were circulated around the tables while Sherry Van Duyn sang a medley of "Jesus Loves Me" and "Oh, How He Loves You and Me." Containers were received by Jane Solomon and Karen Weidenhamer. It was a joy to note that in addition to society checks, cash gifts were also given. Perhaps these were offerings from ladies who are not W.M.S. members or those who had additional love gifts.

On Thursday Thelma Morton and Fae Musser of the Bryan I Society spoke of the benevolences which would benefit from our thankful hearts. Marsha Nies played appropriate music while the ladies presented their **thank offerings**.

MUSICIANS

Singing is always a special part of the W.M.S. meetings. Deanna Benshoff (St. Luke) and DeAnn Oburn (Loree I) were song leaders, and Marsha Nies (Masontown) was the pianist. The theme song "To Be God's People" was new to me, but very singable. It is in the Word songbook.

On Tuesday an Indiana trio (Sandra Sharp, Dutchtown; Esther Mishler, Goshen; Pat Lusch, Huntington, accompanied by DeAnn Oburn) presented a medley "Mansion Over the Hilltop" and "At Calvary."

The Heart's Desire trio (Susie Black, College Corner; Debby Beverly and Diane Winkler, both of New Lebanon) gave special music at the luncheon. Their numbers were "Lord, Somebody Needs You," "When I Consider," "This Day is a Blessing from the Lord," and "He Looked Beyond My Fault."

In keeping with the Missions theme Thursday, Daniel and Kathy (Aspinall) Rosales (Iglesia de los Hermanos, Sarasota) sang two songs in Spanish with Daniel's guitar accompaniment. This was a special treat.

MISSIONARIES

One of the joys of conference is the opportunity to visit with the missionaries. They are always gracious. On Tuesday Nancy Hostetler and Karen Best from Riverside Christian School (Lost Creek, KY) expressed their sincere thanks for

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

your support to the staff and school. Gift certificates, soup labels, offerings, and especially prayers are appreciated. Although the hot lunch program, funded by the state, has been discontinued, a hot meal is still provided at noon at a minimal or no cost. Both ladies requested our continuing prayers for the staff.

Thursday's missionary was Adriana Ferreri from Medellín, Colombia. She and her husband, Marcelo, were sent from the Argentine Brethren Church to Medellín — a daughter congregation. They have been there eleven months. Their daughter, Jana (Hannah) is 2½; she is a dear child. Adriana's greetings were translated by Claudia (Aspinall) Horner. She expressed her thanks for all the cards and notes of encouragement. She works with the women and children. In June 60 children attended the Bible School. In addition to spiritual food, the children received physical food at noon. The Ferreris live and work in a very poor neighborhood.

Cindy Smith told of her visit to India in the spring, when she accompanied her husband, Reilly. In the city of Rajamundry, with a population of over 1 million people, the Brethren Mission has two orphanages and the church. Over the church is a large sign, lighted at night, with the verse "Come unto Me. . . ." (Matt. 11:28-29) and the praying hands. Certainly this is a light in the darkness.

The Smiths were present for the dedication of a new church funded by a Brethren couple. This is in a village of 10,000 people. Cindy said the gifts from the W.M.S. are evident in many areas. She also commented on Sudhir Kumar and his wife, Latha, and their new ministry in Vijayawada.

Tracy Ruggles sent greetings from Mexico City. She appreciates very much your prayers, cards, and notes of encouragement.

BUSINESS

Although Shirley Black was present, she preferred not to preside. Marilyn Aspinall picked up Shirley's notes and presided very efficiently.

A total of 92 delegates and 11 guests were registered for the conference.

The following committees functioned during the week:

Nominating: Susan Kidd (Bethlehem) and Carolyn Waters (Waterloo).

Credential: Nancy Grumblin (Johnstown III) and Pauline Winfield (New Lebanon).

Auditing: Sharon Williams (Roanoke). She examined the books of the financial secretary (Joanne Kroft) and the literature secretary (Penny Knouff) and found them to be accurate and in good order. Presiding officer Marilyn Aspinall read the report from the CPA who regularly audits the reports of the treasurer (JoAnn Seaman). He said in part, "The minutes and the treasurer's reports indicate a high level of interest in the Women's Missionary Society by the church and members of the W.M.S."

Notes of resignation from Marilyn Aspinall, vice president, and JoAnn Seaman, treasurer, were received and accepted by the Executive Board. Words of commendation and gifts of appreciation recognized their years of ministry. Marilyn served three and JoAnn fifteen years.

DeAnn Oburn (Loree I) was elected vice president and Janet Rufener (Ashland Park Street Joy) was elected treasurer.

The following officers were appointed and approved by Conference:

General Secretary, Nancy Hunn
Assistant Secretary, Trudy Kerner
Assistant Treasurer, JoAnn Seaman
Literature Secretary, Penny Knouff
Editor of the *Devotional Guide*,

Nancy Hunn
Editor of the *Newsletter*, Joan Ronk
Subscription Secretary, Ginny Hoyt
Sewing and World Relief Coordinator, Joan Merrill

General Conference Moderator John Shultz installed the elected and the appointed officers. Basing his comments on I Peter 4:7-11, he challenged each one to use her abilities unto the Lord that in all things He might be praised.

FINANCES

Giving during 1997-98 decreased from the previous year, which meant expenditures for this year decreased. You will remember, W.M.S. allocates money received previously; we do not spend in advance.

The Board recommended this 1998-99 budget:

Benevolences	\$14,643
ATS	\$3,600
World/Home	
Missions	7,043
Campus Ministry	1,500
Riverside Christian	
School	1,500
Scholarship, AU	1,000
Publications	\$ 6,792
<i>Newsletter</i>	
<i>Devotional Guide</i>	
Other Expenses	\$ 2,065
Administrative	
Social Security	
Gifts and Conference	
Total	<u>\$23,500</u>

The Conference adopted the budget. (Some societies sent their offerings directly to the Seminary; hence, the W.M.S. amount received by and granted to ATS was less.)

Offerings

Joanne Kroft reported that the preliminary project offering was \$10,267.54! This was designated for the SATS.

Conference designated the interest from the Legacy Fund of \$3,200 also for the SATS.

Sewing and World Relief

Gifts from the auction were designated for scholarships for students at the SATS. In addition to coordinating the various items for the auction (quilt, tote bags, wall hangings, etc.), Joan Merrill (Sewing and World Relief Coordinator) revised the *Service Guide*. It is an attractive booklet and full of suggestions for ministry in at-home areas as well as abroad. Needs, addresses, and information about quilt squares are included in the *Guide*. Thanks to Joan and her husband, Dayrl, who assisted her.

(continued on next page)

Project

For the 1998-99 project, the Board recommended that offerings be designated for the ministry in Vijayawada, India, where Sudhir and Latha Kumar minister. Conference approved this recommendation.

Scholarship

Conference approved awarding the \$1,000 scholarship to Jamie Gillespie, a senior at Ashland University. Jamie is very active on campus and in the national BYIC program.

President's Pen (continued)

them in a heavenly way. Speaking of heaven, our W.M.S. luncheon speaker of two years ago, Barbara Hess, went to be with the Lord on July 25.

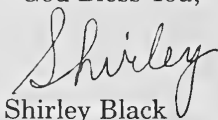
Many of us are going through various problems. We need God's love and peace. If you read John 14:27-31, you will see that Jesus is the One Who gives us peace in the storms of our lives. He is our "security blanket" when we are afraid and fearful. When we are weak and upset, Jesus holds us and comforts our hearts.

In II Corinthians 1:3-4 we read, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles . . ." Think of a time God comforted you in a difficult situation. Thank Him for that comfort.

I am sure you will enjoy our new *Devotional Guide*. Nancy Hunn did a wonderful job with this. Please read all of the articles. You do not necessarily need to do this at your meetings, but at least read them individually. These ladies put a lot of time and effort into writing the articles. They are full of information of each woman. Also note the new format of the W.M.S. Commitments on page 46. All the old commitments are included, but condensed.

I thank you for your prayers and all of the beautiful cards. I really appreciate them.

God Bless You,


Shirley Black

P.S. I just got a call from my doctor. The doctor specialists decided they will do the new gamma laser surgery to "zap" the tumor. [The surgery took place on August 14.]

Obedience (continued)

To feed those hungry flames at supper, be sure to include huge portions of Praise, Worship, and Fellowship with other Christians. Praising God in worship and fellowship will build our metabolism, enabling us to fight off the temptations to reach into that cooky jar of disobedience.

Making sure we have had our three square meals (prayer, His Word, and worship) will build a bonfire of love in our hearts for our Lord. With that bonfire burning so strong, it will give us the strength we need to refrain from the junk foods of anger, hate, envy, selfishness, and all those other candies of sin on the shelves of Satan's candy store.

Keep feeding your heart's flame a balanced diet of prayer, His Word, and worship. Add a sweet snack of trust *in Him who loves you*. Your love fire will grow so strong it will meld a golden bar of obedience into the very depth of your soul. Make this your life's spiritual diet and you are sure to become a loving, obedient child of God.

Thought for Labor Day or any day: *Do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you* (I Samuel 10:7).

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Annually I try to convey Conference enthusiasm to you who could not attend. It was a *good* week! Next year's dates are August 2-6 in Ashland. I hope you can attend.

The *Devotional Guide* was written by women about women. I hope you will study each biblical lady, profit from her life, and realize how you may be remembered. It is exciting to know that women across the denomination are simultaneously studying these outstanding examples! If we take to heart their Christ-like attributes, we will be changed! Thank you, Nancy, for editing the *Devotional Guide*.

The Spanish-speaking missionaries were one of the highlights. For us who speak no Spanish, and for them who speak no English, smiles give important messages and a hug means love in any language.

Wednesday was designated as Men's and Women's Day. Seminars were held and two were especially meaningful to us women. One elaborated upon Faith Partners, which is a new opportunity for service. It was first introduced in the July/August *Brethren Evangelist*. During the week the concept was elaborated on in the seminar and table talks by Cheryl Schmiedt (Manteca) and Carolyn Cooksey (Ashland). Faith Partners is a network of contacts and services provided to all Christians, and especially to women of The Brethren Church. I suggest that you read p. 8 in the July/August *Evangelist*, think, pray for guidance, and respond to Cheryl.

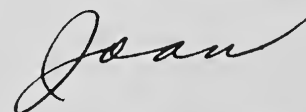
The second seminar, presented by Barbara Hagerich, dealt with women's health issues. She talked about myths and truths of cancer, menopause, and osteoporosis. Barbara has her Master's degree in Nursing and is a Certified Diabetes Educator as well as the Pennsylvania District W.M.S. president. Contact her, if you wish information.

Remember to send dues of \$7.50 per member and the revised membership list to Joanne Kroft by October 31. Don't send a substitute list, but return the list you received from the National Office.

From the General Secretary's report we noted an increase of 16 members and one new society (North Manchester Fellowship). Three societies have been reactivated (Ardmore Abigail, Columbus, and Fremont). Will you send these four groups encouragement notes? Our membership is now 1,212 and we have 86 societies.

Study the commitments printed in the *Devotional Guide* on p. 46. All the old commitments are included in this new format.

Your friend,



Joan

Clive Calver sees signs that God is at work among the Brethren

YOU ARE SAYING THINGS at this Conference that I'm not used to hearing in the United States since coming from Britain last year, Clive Calver* told Brethren during the Thursday evening service of General Conference. "I hear you saying, 'This denomination is changing. This church is at a moment in history that is crucial for it.' . . . You say, 'Something is happening among us!'" A comfortable church doesn't say these things, he declared. "But a church that is on the brink of hearing God say something fresh and new and real does say it!"

Dr. Calver went on to state that what he was hearing at this Conference reminded him of what some people were saying in Britain in the late 1970s, when evangelical Christians made up only 1.8 percent of the British population. "You are saying, 'Something is happening!' I remember what it was like [in Britain] when we started to say, 'Something is happening!' We started to grow again. It was [19]81, and the growth has been non-stop ever since!"

Having acknowledged these signs of renewal in The Brethren Church, Dr. Calver turned to chapter 4 of the Gospel of John as he prepared to talk specifically about renewal in mission. From this passage he drew out four conclusions about renewal.

Submit to God's agenda

First, if we are going to see renewal in mission, we have to get off our agenda and onto God's. John 4:4 says that when Jesus went from Judea to Galilee, he had to go through Samaria. Geographically this wasn't true. There was another route He could have taken. But Jesus had to go through Samaria because it was the Father's agenda for His life. He

**Dr. Calver is president of World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals. Before taking this position last year, he served 14 years as president of the Evangelical Alliance of the United Kingdom.*



Dr. Clive Calver

was going to meet a woman there whom God would use to change Samaria. The agenda for her life would change as well. "If we are going to see renewal in mission," Dr. Calver said, "it's going to be by a people submitting their lives to the agenda of God."

Learn how to sacrifice

Second, if we are going to see renewal in mission, we have to learn how to sacrifice. When Jesus entered Samaria, He met a woman at a well. He broke all the social conventions of the time by asking her for a drink. In doing so, He made Himself vulnerable. He sacrificed His own position and comfort because He could see what this woman

DR. CALVER also spoke at the World Relief Soup Lunch at Conference. He said that World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals—the third-largest relief organization in the United States—is different from other relief agencies in that it *works through churches* in other countries to give relief to the poor and suffering, rather than giving direct help. He also emphasized the inseparable tie between the Gospel message and social action in World Relief's work.

He then talked about Sudan, where

was going to be in the Father's hands. We need to recover a word in the Christian ministry and it is the word "sacrifice," Dr. Calver said. "There are no careers in Christian service. There's just sacrifice."

Know who Jesus is

Third, if we want to see renewal in mission, we have to know who Jesus is and see ourselves in His eyes. When her conversation with Jesus came too close to home, the Samaritan woman said, "I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

By His response to her, Jesus revealed to the woman that He is not only the Messiah, but that He is God. "When you know Jesus, you do what He tells you to," Dr. Calver said. "When you know Jesus, you use the gifts He's given you. . . . You give what *you* have and are."

Bring a village to Jesus

Fourth, if we are going to see renewal in mission, we have to let God use us to bring a village to Jesus. After her encounter with Jesus, the woman of Samaria went back to her village and told the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" The people went flocking to Jesus, and they, too, put their faith in Him.

If we get off our agenda and on to God's, if we learn what sacrifice really is, and if we know who Jesus is and see ourselves in His eyes, then God can use us to bring a village, a church, a new area, or even a country to Jesus as well. "It's incredible what God can do through you," Dr. Calver proclaimed. [†]

he had visited just before coming to Conference. Using slide pictures he had taken there, he described the terrible plight of the Sudanese people, hundreds of thousands of whom are on the brink of starvation. In spite of this, the church in Sudan is the fastest-growing church in Africa, as people in their extremity turn to God for salvation and hope.

Touched by his message, Brethren gave an offering of \$6,347.51 for Sudan, the largest World Relief offering ever received at a General Conference. [†]

David West looks at the future of our church

WHEN he was a younger man—David West* told Brethren at the concluding session of General Conference—he worked as a maintenance person at an excelsior plant. Five weeks into the job, he was given the task of doing some welding. Even though he didn't know how to weld, he launched boldly into the task, only to discover that he was "as incompetent as a squirrel."

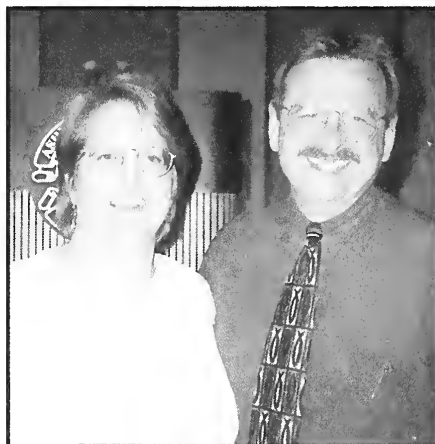
As he worked, he suddenly felt a tap on his shoulder. When he turned and saw the maintenance foreman standing behind him, he was sure he would be fired on the spot. But instead, the foreman put his arm around him, put his hand on West's hand, and gently taught him to weld.

God wants to teach us

"I really believe that what happened to me all those years ago is what God is attempting to do in our lives today," Rev. West continued. "I want to share with you today that I believe that if we get a grasp of the reality of God wanting to put His arms around us and take our hands and teach us what He wants to teach us, that we will not only learn a skill, but we will be empowered and our lives will be changed because we will know that in His eyes we are valued."

Turning to Scripture, he read several verses from 2 Corinthians 1, focusing particularly on verse 20: *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ.* "I find that pretty amazing!" Rev. West exclaimed. "Without exception, no matter what God's promises are, they are 'Yes' to us."

"What is the future of the Brethren? There are many [who are] more qualified than me to paint a picture of what that might look like," he continued. "What I would like to ask you to think about is, if all of God's



Rev. West and his wife, Dawn, relax for a moment following his message.

promises are 'Yes' in Christ, then the future of the church lies in the reality of that, of how we live that."

"Think of all the questions that you and I ask," he said. "We ask [God], 'Do you really love me?' And we learned on Monday night, 'He's nuts about us!'" "We ask, 'Am I truly forgiven? Even the really bad stuff I did?' . . . God's promises in Christ say, 'Yes! Yes!'"

"We ask the questions: 'Is your grace really sufficient? Do you really have a ministry with my name on it? Am I really completely secure in you? Are there really purposes to be found in every circumstance?' To these and all the other questions you and I might have, there is a resounding **'YES'** in Christ! . . . The future of our church lies in the reality of whether or not we believe that and live it, and whether or not our churches believe that and live it."

Proclaiming a "Yes" message

But not only do we have that everlasting promise of "Yes" in Christ, we have the privilege of sharing that promise with others, Rev. West said. "Our job, then, is proclaiming a 'Yes' message in a 'Maybe' world."

Returning to the image of God putting His arms around us, Rev. West said, "This is where the future of our church lies, in whether or not

we believe in the reality of the 'Yes' and 'Amen' of Jesus Christ and whether or not we allow our Father to come alongside of us and say, 'Let me show you how we're going to do these things. Let me show you how I will lead and empower my church.'"

What would we look like?

"What would our church look like if we lived the integrity of this passage?" Rev. West asked. It would become a church of loving relationships. It would become a church in which congregations invested their resources in God's kingdom. They wouldn't hold hundreds of thousands of dollars for a rainy day when rivers of grace needing their resources are flowing right in front of them.

How would living this passage affect our attitude toward leadership care? "A church that believes the eternal everlasting 'Yes' of Christ will see leadership as a gift of God, something to be cared for, loved, protected, encouraged, supported, one of the things that we would go to the wall for," he said.

"A church that really believes that Jesus Christ is the 'Yes' to everything will spend more time celebrating and less time commiserating," he said. "The church that believes in the future of the 'Yes' and the 'Amen' to the glory of God will know that there's ministry for everybody," he added. "A church that believes in the 'Yes' and 'Amen' will not be threatened by young men and women who come up and say, 'I want to do ministry. What can I do?'"

"[Our future] does not lie in us developing a plan and a program and a strategy. It lies in us resting in the power and the presence and the Spirit of God, and [in us] knowing and shouting a resounding **'YES!'** That's what the world wants to hear," Rev. West declared.

"Fill in all the blanks of program you want—I don't really care. There are tons of blanks to fill. But I only want one person to fill them. God! And for us to seek Him and just say, 'Master, take my hand and teach me.'"

"How rigid is your arm?" he asked in conclusion. "Are you willing to relax and let the Spirit of God draw you to where He wants to take you?"

[†]

*Rev. West is director of Congregational Ministries and of U.S. Missions for The Brethren Church.

Conference Business Sessions

BUSINESS SESSIONS, held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings of Conference, were short and to the point, to the delight of most delegates. Elections and approval of the 1999 budget were the only major business items.

New congregations

One new church was accepted by the Conference, the **Three Seasons Church** of Berlin, Pa. This new congregation is an offshoot of the Berlin Brethren Church. Having begun with 75 to 80 people, the congregation did not seek class or mission congregation status, but asked to be recognized as an established church.

Moderator John Shultz also announced that the Executive Board recently gave formal recognition to three new classes: **Rock Springs**

Community Church, a new congregation being planted in Vista, Calif., by Jim and Stephanie Boyd; **Oasis Community Church**, a new church being started by Jim and Ann Miller and Glenn and Sarah Black in a suburban area of Phoenix, Ariz.; and **Iglesia de los Hermanos**, a Hispanic congregation led by Rev. Juan and Amelia Arregin, which meets in the building of the First Brethren Church in Tucson, Ariz. He also announced that **Gateway Brethren Fellowship**, a young congregation in Hagerstown, Md., pastored by Rev. Gerald Barr, was advanced from class to *mission church* status in March.

A total of 366 delegates registered for this Conference. This is 12 more than last year, when Conference was held in South Bend, Ind., but 30 less

than in 1996, when Conference was in Ashland. There were 208 lay delegates, 142 ministerial delegates (including 24 *in absentia*), 13 district delegates, and 3 delegates from Conference cooperating agencies.

Elections

There was no election of a moderator this year, since the moderator now serves a three-year term. Moderator John Shultz will continue to serve until the year 2000.

A member at-large was elected to each of the two councils. (Nine of the members of each council are elected directly by districts.) Rev. Tim Garner, pastor of the Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren Church, was elected to the *Congregational Ministries Council*. Beverly Baker, member and secretary of the South Bend, Ind., First Brethren Church, was elected to the *Missionary Ministries Council*.

Steve Hollewell was elected to the *Rules and Organization Committee*; Dale Stoffer to the *Polity Committee*; and Arden Gilmer was reelected as a *Retirement Fund trustee*. The new *Nominating Committee* is Robert Keplinger, Richard Winfield, Beverly Baker, Sherry Bowling, Tony Price, and John Howenstine.

Elected to the *Conference Membership Committee* were DeAnn Oburn, Charlene Rowser, Rex McConahay, Bobbi McConahay, Tracy Whiteside, Jill Stone, and Sue Hurd. *Members of the Ways and Means Committee* (who serve so diligently during Conference week) are Virgil Barnhart, Bonnie Coffman, Cheryl Ennis, Wesley Glass, William Hesketh, Ralph Hurley, Keith Immel, Linda Immel, DeWayne Lusch, Ronald Miller, John Rieger, Eugene Robbins, Bruce Wilkinson (not the one who spoke at this Conference), and Gerald Zook.

Budget

A budget slightly over 1½-million dollars was approved for The Brethren Church in 1999. Projected income is \$1,581,100 (\$568,100 for Congregational Ministries and \$1,013,000 for Missionary Ministries). Projected expenses are \$1,562,521, (\$566,755 for Congregational Ministries and \$995,766 for Missionary Ministries). [✚]

Women's Seminar

Following the workshop on *Marriage Relationships* by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson on Wednesday morning (see page 5), the men and women met separately. Dr. Wilkinson led the men in a question and answer time in which he answered questions related to his presentations.

Cheryl Schmiedt of the Northgate Community Brethren Church in Manteca, Calif., and her district's representative on the Congregational Ministries Council, led the women in a seminar that focused on the spiritual formation of women.

The theme of the seminar was Luke 10:27—loving the Lord with heart, soul, mind, and strength. Mrs. Schmiedt introduced **Faith Partners**, a group of people with a concern for the spiritual formation of women. The group's goals are to vigorously pursue spiritual growth, to encourage women to take up the ministries to which they are called, and to support existing ministries. Faith Partners also wants to establish a network of contacts and services to benefit all Christians, and especially Brethren women.

The seminar also included presentations by Carolyn Cooksey, Bar-

bara Hagerich, and Louise Waller. Mrs. Cooksey of Park Street Brethren Church talked about loving the Lord with our souls (commitment to spiritual formation). Mrs. Hagerich of Vinco Brethren Church spoke about loving the Lord with our strength (focusing on health ministries that congregations can establish). Louise Waller of Northwest Brethren Chapel in Tucson (but living in Ashland) focused on loving the Lord with our hearts and minds (teaching ourselves to think true thoughts about God and ourselves, as well as feeling His love for us). All speakers emphasized God's power to transform lives.

The seminar ended with a short time of brainstorming about needs of women in The Brethren Church and resources to meet those needs. Mrs. Schmiedt invited participants to send suggestions of newsletters, ministry ideas, study materials, worship and retreat aids, workshop and retreats, missions, and Internet ideas. (Send to Faith Partners, c/o Cheryl Schmiedt, 20687 S. Manteca Rd., Manteca, CA 95337-9710. Also see the response form "Introducing Faith Partners for Women" on page 8 of the July/August EVANGELIST.

— reported by Dr. Brenda Colijn

Youth were “under construction” at the BYIC Convention

WHEN GOD decides to do some construction in our lives, He does a complete renovation! That was one of many lessons the youth learned at the Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) Convention this year.

The theme of the week was *Under Construction*, taken from Philippians 1:6—*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ*. And good work He did! Twelve young people dedicated their lives to full-time Christian ministry, and many others gave in to God’s call to follow Him. To cap off the week, about 95 percent of the youth reported that God had really started some construction in their lives during the week. Praise the Lord!

“Ground Breaking” for the Convention occurred Monday evening, with a special message by Dr. Marvin McMickle. Then the youth were led on a prayer tour by Ann Miller.

But this was only the beginning! Other highlights of the week included speakers Skip Snell, Eric Sandberg, Yummi Tyler, and Ashland University’s head women’s basketball coach Sue Ramsey. There was also a ministry fair, where youth learned about various ministries offered by The Brethren Church—mission work, church planting, camping, and summer ministries.

A wide variety of “personal construction workshops” were also offered. The youth could choose which workshops they wanted to attend, to learn more about a talent they could use in their ministry. Topics ranged *from* mentoring, being an effective leader, starting a worship team, getting along with your family, and motivating your youth group *to* fundraising, starting a Bible study, and using your spiritual gifts.

Wednesday was a day to relax and

fellowship with others, as the youth headed to Cedar Point Amusement Park for the day. They returned in time to hear the popular Christian recording group Nitro Praise put on



BYIC Convention coordinator Jaime Gillespie (2nd from l.) with three of the youth who attended the Convention.

a concert that would make Christians in even the most traditional congregation clap their hands!

But Wednesday was only halfway through the Convention. Thursday and Friday were filled with more exciting events! On Thursday morning the youth had the unique opportunity to hear Steve Saint, son of slain missionary Nick Saint, and

two members of the “Auca” (Huaorani) Indian tribe of Ecuador share their testimony. These men told how God had used the lives of five martyred missionaries to help bring the once “savage killers” to a knowledge and acceptance of God’s love and forgiveness.

Following this session, the youth went on service projects around Ashland. Or they attended a seminar to learn more about the continual construction God performs in our lives. That evening they were blessed by the amazing talents of some of their fellow youth at a “Coffeehouse.” And the day ended with an experience of the amazing acceptance and forgiveness of Christ at Communion.

Friday, like other mornings, started off with Morning Praise. Then the youth joined the adults for the closing session of both the Youth Convention and the Adult Conference. First the youth shared some of the enthusiasm and blessings of their week with the adults.

And then youth and adults listened together as Rev. Dave West spoke about the “Future of The Brethren Church” (see page 8).

God was hard at work all week doing “construction” in the lives of our youth. As a result, they returned home with renewed spirits and a passion to serve the Lord! [✠]

— reported by Jaime Gillespie



Some of the youth did their service project by planting trees on the grounds of the new Living Waters Community (Brethren) Church of Mansfield, Ohio.

Brethren Youth: Ready to Run the Race to Success

By Jaime Gillespie



**"Success requires the vision to see,
the faith to believe, and the courage to do!"**

IMAGINE YOURSELF ready to run the biggest race of your life. You kneel at the starting line thinking back over the months or years of hard work and dedication you have poured into this event. You rejoice as you remember each small victory along the way, and also each spill that you took. You rejoice for the hard times, for with the wisdom that comes with hindsight you can look back and know that even though you fell, you got back up, kept going, and steadily crept toward success.

Now as your muscles tense in anticipation and your heart pounds with excitement, you look confidently at the race before you. You have faith that you can do it and the courage to give it your best. All you need now is the vision to see it through.

This is exactly where Brethren Youth are today. We are kneeling in the starting blocks, ready to spring forward with excitement and enthusiasm. As an organization we have been "in training" for the last 56 years. Now we are ready to use the skills we have learned to reach out to more youth in our denomination and around the world.

Over the years we have undergone many changes, some just on the surface and others deep within the organization. We have benefited from strong leadership and have grown into an exciting program. As with anything, there have been some potholes along the way. But with God's constant love and care,

we have managed to pull ourselves from those holes and move steadily toward our goal. That goal is to serve Jesus Christ—our Brother, our Mentor, our Lord.

The youth program will continue to grow and change over the next few years. Instead of focusing so much on numbers, it will focus more on helping youth mature into strong Christian leaders and disciples. Once the youth have a strong foundation, they will naturally bring other people to Christ by their lifestyle and their love and enthusiasm for Jesus.

Goals for the future

Brethren Youth have many goals as we head into the 21st century. Plans are already underway for the 1999 National Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) Convention in Ashland and the year 2000 Convention in Estes Park, Colorado. The 1999 Summer Ministry program will undergo reconstruction to focus more specifically on training youth to be servant leaders and disciples and to equip them with the necessary tools to work in the world as servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition, initial plans are being investigated to construct a youth training center in Ashland. This would be used to train youth in various kinds of ministry, such as worship, puppetry, mime, facilitating workshops, and much more.

If asked what areas of youth programming I personally think need

to be improved, I would answer that programs need to be established to serve youth of all ages. The BYIC program currently focuses primarily on junior and senior high youth. I would like to see more quality programs for younger children, post-high youth, and young adults.

I would also like to see a broader summer ministries program, which would involve more people—from junior high youth to adults and including families and retired adults. I would like to see more districts and local churches planning short-term missions trips or work trips. And most of all, I would like to see more follow-up from all ministry opportunities which are offered through The Brethren Church.

I think it is extremely important to continually encourage youth, not just during the summer but all year long. It hasn't been very long ago that I graduated from high school, and I can still remember the excitement and fire I would feel coming off a summer of ministry as an intern or district crusader. But then winter would come and the sparks would slowly die, since they were fanned only once or twice at district rallies and retreats.

If we could train youth to serve in the summer, then use the skills they have developed to do ministry in other areas throughout the year, I believe they would eventually become a raging fire for Jesus Christ that Satan could never snuff out.

God *is* at work among our youth. We pray that you adults will continue to support the BYIC program. September is designated as **Youth Month** in The Brethren Church, and we ask that you support the youth both financially and by your prayers. If your church doesn't take a special offering for the youth this month, please send your donation to The Brethren Church National Office marked for *National BYIC*.

Until next time, "Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you've got, be resolute, and love without stopping" (1 Cor. 16:13, *Eugene Peterson translation*). [†]

Ms. Gillespie, a senior at Ashland University, served as coordinator for this year's BYIC Convention and continues to work with the BYIC program on a part-time basis.

Mission Workers Honored

During the Missions Banquet at Conference, the Missionary Ministries Council honored four mission workers for their years of service to The Brethren Church.

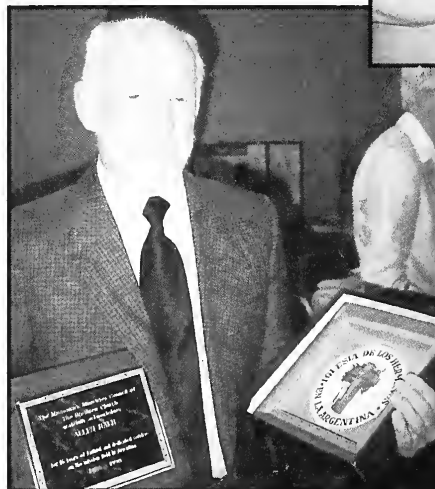
Rev. Phil and Jean Lersch (below) were presented a plaque gratefully acknowledging their 30 years of service in educational ministry through Brethren House Ministries in St. Petersburg, Fla. The Lersches concluded this ministry at the end of 1997. When presented the plaque, the



Lersches also acknowledged their team member, Bonnie Munson, who served with them for 25 years.

Allen Baer (below) was honored for his 16 years of service as a missionary in Argentina. Allen retired from mission service in June.

Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda (center of photo at right) was honored for 26 years of service among Spanish-speaking



people in North and South America. He resigned at the end of 1997 as Latin America Consultant for Brethren Missions. His wife, Maria, continues her Hispanic Radio Ministry.

Both the Mirandas and Allen Baer also received plaques from the Argentine Brethren Church, presented by José Rivero, the church's president, shown with the Mirandas (above).

Workshop looks at "Natural Church Development"

Natural Church Development was the title of an all-Conference workshop presented by Rev. Ronald W. Waters on Tuesday morning of Conference. During the workshop, Rev. Waters presented and elaborated on eight essential qualities of healthy churches. The eight qualities considered were identified by Christian A. Schwarz through extensive research around the world.

The eight qualities probably do not sound new to most Brethren. They include:

1. Empowering leadership — leaders equipping other Christians to do ministry.
2. Gift-oriented ministry — Christians using their gifts to build up the church.
3. Passionate spirituality — members living their faith.
4. Functional structures — church practices and structures are designed for effective ministry.
5. Inspiring worship services — wor-

ship is a high point of the week for much of the congregation.

6. Holistic small groups — multiplication of small groups that meet the needs of people.
7. Need-oriented evangelism — members are involved in evangelistic activities directed to the needs of the people they are trying to reach.
8. Loving relationships — Christ's love permeates church activities and members love one another.

Every church studied that manifests all eight of these qualities to a substantial degree (a "quality index" of 65% or more) has been found to be a growing church.

Several resources are available to help churches learn more about Natural Church Development, including a book by that title by Christian A. Schwarz. A Natural Church Development survey can also be administered in a church to determine to what degree it possesses these eight qualities. Contact Rev. Waters, The Brethren Church's Natural Church Development consultant, for more information (phone 419-289-5771). [†]

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A newsletter for Brethren people

October 1998

How to Show Appreciation to Your Pastor

By David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries

DEAR BRETHREN, I want to talk to you about your pastor. October is Pastor Appreciation Month. I want to suggest some ways that you can show appreciation to your pastor not only during October, but also throughout the year.

The negatives of being a pastor are well known. The pastor and his family live in a glass house, under constant scrutiny by members of the congregation. Pastors bear the brunt of criticism for things that go wrong in the church. And pastors almost always experience a great deal of stress in their work. But what I want to convey to you are not the negatives, but how we can impact the lives and ministries of our pastors in positive ways.

Pray for your pastor

First and foremost, **pray for your pastor**. Pray that God will give him wisdom and strength of character. Pray for his protection from evil and temptations. Pray also for his family. Pray that his ministry will be a joy, not a chore or the cause of tensions in his home.

Respect your pastor. Show that respect by how you treat him and by what you say about him. Never speak negatively of him in public, and certainly not before non-Christians. If a person in the Body of Christ maligns the pastor, this reflects badly on all Christians, and especially on those in the local church.

Talk to your pastor. Tell him you appreciate him and his ministry. Many times Brethren people have told me something good about their pastor. But when I mentioned it to the pastor, he had no idea that people appreciated what he had said or



done. If you have a compliment or kind word for your pastor, tell *him*. Encourage your pastor as often as you can. Just a word of encouragement can make a big difference.

Take care of your pastor's educational needs. Every pastor is enriched by learning experiences that feed his mind and his spirit. The congregation benefits as well when the pastor is inspired and filled with new ideas to use in messages and Bible studies. So make sure that he is provided time and funds for continuing education.

Pay your pastor adequately

Look after your pastor's financial needs. Many churches fall short in this area. Paul gives us these guidelines in 1 Timothy 5:17-18: "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those

whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'" In addition to his salary, allot funds for insurance, retirement, continuing education, attendance at the annual retreat for Brethren pastors and their spouses, and other needs.

Make sure that his contract also provides time off for a vacation and time to spend with his family. If his own home is not in good health, it cannot serve as a model for others.

Love your pastor

Most important of all, **love your pastor**. If we truly love our pastors, everything else will fall into place. Love builds relationships; love shows honor; love eliminates unhealthy criticism; love provides support of all kinds. In fact, we cannot honestly love our pastors and then neglect their needs.

I do hope that you will take time during October to show honor and appreciation to your pastor. Brethren pastors need and deserve our appreciation. So celebrate the person whom God has sent into the life of your church. You will be blessed if you do. In fact, from all that we read in the New Testament, to honor your pastor is to honor God. [†]

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Steve Saint with Huaorani tribesmen Mincaye (c.) and Tementa.

Conference session demonstrates God's wonders performed

"GOD WORKS in mysterious ways His wonders to perform," Steve Saint told a crowd of youth and adults at General Conference, quoting William Cowper. What he and the two men with him shared in the next 90 minutes certainly demonstrated the truth of those well-known words.

Steve Saint is the son of Nate Saint, one of five missionaries* killed in 1956 in the jungles of Ecuador by members of the so-called "Auca" (savage) tribe. With Steve Saint on the platform were two members of that tribe, now known as the Huaorani.

One of the two was Mincaye. He is one of six men who speared the five missionaries to death. He is now a

**The other four slain missionaries were Jim Elliot, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming, and Ed McCully.*

Christian and the surrogate grandfather of Steve Saint's children. The other was Tementa. Tementa is the son of one of the six men who killed the missionaries. He, too, is a Christian and serves as a leader in the Huaorani church.

Certainly the presence of these three men together on the same platform is an example of God's wonders performed. How did it come about?

A little more than 2½ years after the massacre of the five missionaries, Rachel Saint (Nate's sister and Steve's aunt) and Elisabeth Elliot (widow of Jim Elliot, another of the martyred missionaries) were invited to live among the Huaoranis. They were asked to come and teach the Huaoranis about God's trail (the way to God). As a result of their work, some of Huaoranis became God-followers (Christians), includ-

ing Mincaye and Tementa. Elisabeth Elliot stayed with the Huaorani for 2½ years. Rachel Saint stayed for the rest of her life, until she died of cancer in 1994.

When he was eight or nine years old, Steve began making visits to his Aunt Rachel. He would live with her during his school vacations. As a result, he grew to love the Huaorani people and learned their language.

When Rachel died in 1994, Steve went back to Ecuador to bury her in the jungle, where she had lived most of her life. After the burial, the Huaorani elders told Steve, "Now we say you come live with us." They said that they needed someone to come and teach them how to teach their children to follow God's trail.

By this time, Steve was married, owned a business, and had four children of his own, two in high school and two in college. He had no plans to go and live in the jungle. But when he realized that he either had to go and live among them or else sever his relationship with these people whom he had loved since he was a boy, he knew that severing the relationship was too dear a price to pay.

When he and his family moved to Ecuador, Steve hoped that his children would learn to love the Huaoranis as he loved them. And they have. Mincaye, for example, took them under his wing, protected them, and treated them as though they were his own grandchildren. As a result, they fell in love with him and call him grandfather. Steve commented: "It just happens that the man who is now the surrogate grandfather for my children was the man who killed their grandfather. But that's not a surprise to those of us who've served the Lord for a

(continued on page 5)

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Pontius' Puddle

IT'S GREAT THAT CHURCHES FROM AROUND THE WORLD CAN GET TOGETHER TO COMPARE THE WAYS WE SUFFER FOR OUR FAITH!



IN INDONESIA, 500 OF OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND MANY OF OUR MEMBERS MARTYRED FOR THEIR BELIEFS. SO HOW ABOUT YOU IN THE WEST?



MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM HOW THE AIR CONDITIONING IN OUR SANCTUARY WENT OUT ON THE HOTTEST SUNDAY OF THE SUMMER!



© Joel Kauffman

Conflict in Marriage

By Dan Lawson

Every marriage has its rough times. The problem is that we sometimes refuse to swallow our pride and are unwilling to be the first to kiss and make up.

IT'S NO SECRET that men and women are different. The battle between the sexes has raged on through the ages. He's always warm; she's always cold. She likes to talk; he just grunts. She likes to be touched and held, while touching only means one thing to him. When we look at these differences, is it any wonder that we sometimes have conflict in our marriages?

An electric-blanket ordeal

I'll never forget when my lovely wife and I were first married. We had been given an electric blanket as a wedding present. It was the kind with dual controls, which had been ingeniously invented to keep harmony in the marriage.

Well, as you might guess, we got the thing on upside down. This meant that she controlled the temperature on my side of the blanket, and I controlled the temperature on her side. As a result, I found myself in a blazing inferno, which prompted me to keep turning the control down. This left her shivering in Iceland, and she kept turning the control up.

Eventually, she migrated to my side of the bed, which I normally would have enjoyed. But since I was already burning up, I couldn't stand more heat, so I just had to get out. This, of course, made her very sad—that her new husband did not want to be with her. Fortunately, our marriage survived the electric-blanket ordeal.

Husbands and wives have always had times of difficulty in their marriages. Ladies, when you scrounge in the refrigerator and

find something that has been neglected for weeks, how do you think your husband feels when you bring it to him and say, "Here, taste this and see if it's spoiled"? What are we, men or lab mice that exist solely to determine the potency of spoiled food?

"When we look at these differences [between men and women], is it any wonder that we sometimes have conflict in our marriages?"

Men, when your wife wants to talk to you about something she thinks is important, what message do you communicate when you stare at the TV and respond with caveman grunts—and only do that during the commercials?

The truth is, we sometimes find it difficult to understand one another. I once heard a couple talk about the time the wife wrecked the car. She hit a tree and the husband had a hard time containing himself when she said, "It wasn't my fault; I honked the horn."

Husband, love your wife

In Ephesians 5:25, the Apostle Paul gives this instruction to the church: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . .* When we men start putting this command into practice, we can begin to resolve the conflicts in our marriages. In fact, when we understand this command, we quickly see that it is the man's responsibility to take the initiative, set the example, and be the first to give himself for his wife.

Any of us who know anything at all about the love of Christ can quickly understand what Paul

means in this passage. Because of His love for us, Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross so that all of our faults and sins could be overlooked by God.

This is the way men ought to love their wives. No one is perfect. Yes, you may be annoyed when you go to the microwave in the morning to heat your coffee and find the green beans, which had been forgotten from the previous night's dinner. But if you have the Christ-like love for your wife that Paul is talking about, you will resist the urge to blatantly announce her mistake to the world. You will let love take its place.

This brings us back to the fact that men and women were created different. When God created man, He gave him the mandate to fill the earth and subdue it. When we men read this, we suddenly feel the urge to respond with a Tim Allen grunt.

Men are task-oriented

What this means is that men are most often task-oriented: "fill the earth," "subdue the earth," etc. The problem is that we have developed an aggressive nature to accomplish this mandate from God. From this aggressive nature, we have lost touch with what it means to be sacrificial. Leo Tolstoy described it this way: *Every-one thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself.*

To love with the sacrificial love of Jesus, we must start with ourselves. This means that before we find fault with others, including our wives, we first stop and look at ourselves and the things we have done. This act alone will go a long way in preserving the beauty of our marriages. [†]

Next month we will talk about how His love makes us holy and blameless, and how we men ought to follow the example of Christ.

Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one of a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.



Domestic Violence: What can Christians do?

Final article of a three-part series

by Morven Baker

The first article in this series appeared in the June issue (pp. 5–6). It defined the problem of domestic violence and provided biblical and historical perspectives on this issue. The second article in the series examined forms of domestic abuse and set forth the cycle of abuse. It appeared in the July/August issue (pp. 4 & 6).

HOW CAN CHRISTIANS respond to the cries of battered women and their children? The first thing we must do is look in the mirror and see the abuser in ourselves. We need to understand that we all have been angry and that we all have misused this anger. In other words, we could also be walking in the shoes of the offender. We are forced to admit that “There, but for the grace of God, go I.”

Abusers are people in pain. They are present in every ethnic group, in every denomination, at every level of society. Regardless of their financial or professional position, they may have low self-esteem, poor impulse control, and a strong need to be in control. They may have poor communication skills, be under-achievers, and have isolated themselves from others. On the other hand, they could be the leaders in your community, the teachers of your children, the pastor of your church, or the spouse of your best friend.

Abusers are deceptive

Abusers are deceptive. They may be the kind of person who you believe would “never do things like that.” They can be manipulative and charming. Scripture warns us about them. Psalm 55:20, 21 says, “He has attacked his friends, he has gone back on his word, though his mouth is smoother than butter, he has war in his heart; his words may soothe more than oil, but they are naked

swords.” When a woman gets up the courage to come to you for help and tells you that her husband is being abusive to her and her children, **do not doubt her because of the position of her husband.**

What pastors can do

Pastors, let your congregations know that you are aware of the prevalence of family violence. Show them that you are concerned about those who have been victimized. Let them know that it is okay to talk about the resulting feelings, frustrations, and spiritual problems.

Failure to acknowledge the presence of domestic violence only perpetuates it. And it discourages victims from seeking help. Pastors are role models, like Jesus. Therefore, pastors, don’t be afraid to recognize events like Child Abuse Prevention Month. Be bold enough to suggest that a special offering be taken for your local women’s shelter.

Pastors can also demonstrate their concern for domestic violence during traditional family celebrations, such as Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Sermon illustrations can acknowledge that not all parents are perfect. Weddings and infant dedications also provide an opportunity to remind people that marriages can be abusive and that children need to be protected from violence.

During premarital counseling, pastors need to be alert to any indication of abuse in the relationship. One of the more insidious myths about physical abuse is that it will cease after the wedding. If anything, marriage only gives the situation an opportunity to explode.

Even if there is no evidence of abuse between a couple who are preparing to marry, the subject must be addressed. Couples need to be taught how quickly a simple dispute can

escalate into violence unless mutual respect and understanding are the foundations of their communication. A slap can all too easily graduate into severe blows.

If you talk about it, they will come

There is much that pastors can do to get the subject of domestic violence before their congregations. But pastors, you need to be aware of this: if you are brave enough to talk about domestic violence, you will soon be approached by those in pain. Once they know that you are approachable **and trustworthy**, they will share their stories with you.

So what do you do next? When an abused woman comes to you, your response to her may be the turning point of her life. Or it could destroy her spirit forever. It is very important that you let her tell her story in her own words. It may take several meetings with you before she is even able to reveal her dilemma. It is critical that you set your values, beliefs, and judgments aside for a time to ensure that she feels safe sharing with you.

Try not to give advice. Let the story simply unfold. Listen. Be present. Be compassionate. Assure her that God loves her. Share Scripture passages with her that speak of her value to God, such as Isaiah 43:4—“You are precious to me, and I love you.” Explain to her the cycle of abuse (see the article on pp. 4 & 6 of the July/August issue). And give her reassurance that there is hope.

Do not ask her, “What did you do to provoke the violence?” It is not the victim who causes the violence. It is the batterer who must face the pain within and own the violence.

Help her find shelter

The issue you must face is that this woman and her children are in danger. Therefore they must be taken to a place of safety. Referring her to your local shelter or providing transportation to the home of a member of her extended family would be a good beginning. Even if you are not convinced that abuse has taken place, your only responsibility is to help the family find a place of shelter. It is the responsibility of the local law enforcers to determine if abuse has actually occurred. (next page)

It is also important for pastors (and other caring members of the congregation) to be willing to work in conjunction with trained professionals when counseling both battered women and their abusive husbands. Most pastors and lay people, while they may have the very best of intentions, do not have the skills or the time to deal with the complexities of the abuse situation.

Unfortunately, many pastors are unwilling to refer victims to appropriate resources—a fact that further complicates their involvement with victims. It is not shameful to admit there is abuse within your congregation. It is wrong to keep it hidden. In fact, it is a crime. In most states domestic violence is against the law, and its perpetrators need to be brought to justice.

Your heart will ache for these

women and their children. But it is also important that you feel compassion for the batterer. Taking responsibility does not come easily. On average, only one of two will show up for the first counseling session. And when they do come, fifty percent do not last more than six weeks.

Those who come longer do begin to make changes. But they must be in a counseling facility where they are confronted by other offenders who have already gone through considerable recovery and who have earned the right to challenge them.

The batterer must also want help. According to John 5:6, Jesus asked the man at the pool of Bethesda, "Do you want to get well?" When the man indicated that he did, Jesus told him to get up and take the steps he needed to take in order to be healed. The same is true of the

abusive person. It may also be necessary at some point for the church to exercise discipline. But showing tough love is never easy.

The Greek word for counselor is *paraclete*, meaning "one who walks alongside." In that sense, all Christians should be counselors. We cannot all heal the wounded. We do not all possess the skills to counsel families faced with these problems. But all of us can "walk alongside" and listen, show compassion, and extend hands of fellowship. Jesus is our role model. We are His hands and His feet. Let us model the love of Jesus to others by our willingness to get involved. [†]

Mrs. Baker, a member of the University (Brethren) Church, is a licensed professional clinical counselor associated with Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates in Ashland, Ohio.

God's wonders performed

(continued from page 2)

period of time and have been willing to trust Him. He does that kind of stuff all the time, doesn't He?"

Tementa is another example of the wondrous ways in which God works. His father was the only Huaorani with whom the five missionary martyrs had friendly contact. In fact, Nate Saint took him for a ride in the missions airplane. But Tementa's father turned on the missionaries and was one of the six men who speared the missionaries to death.

A short time later, the Huaorani killed Tementa's father, and Tementa almost died with him. But his mother managed to spare her son, and today he is not only a Christian, but the principal Bible teacher in the Huaorani church. And now Steve Saint is teaching Tementa to fly, so that he can more effectively reach the far-flung areas of the Huaorani tribe.

When asked during the question and answer period about his feelings growing up with the person who killed his dad, Steve said that forgiving them was never an issue with him. When he was a child, he heard his mother tell another woman, "Before we ever went to the field, Nate and I gave our lives

to the Lord. They were His to do with as He pleased. Now if He had asked me, this [Nate's death] might not have been my first choice. But I would never second guess God." Steve commented, "And seeing that example, it never occurred to me that I had anything to excuse."

Steve was also asked to talk about what all this—losing his father, selling his business, living in the jungle—had cost him personally. He replied, "I don't know anything about sacrifice." He noted that even in secular work, "If you get enough reward to offset the cost to you, then we don't consider that sacrifice." Then he added, "If I could share with you folks some of the things that I've seen in my life, what God is doing, and how He has used the story of my dad and grandfather [Mincaye] here and [Dad's] four friends and six of [Mincaye's] Huaorani compatriots, the word sacrifice would never come up."

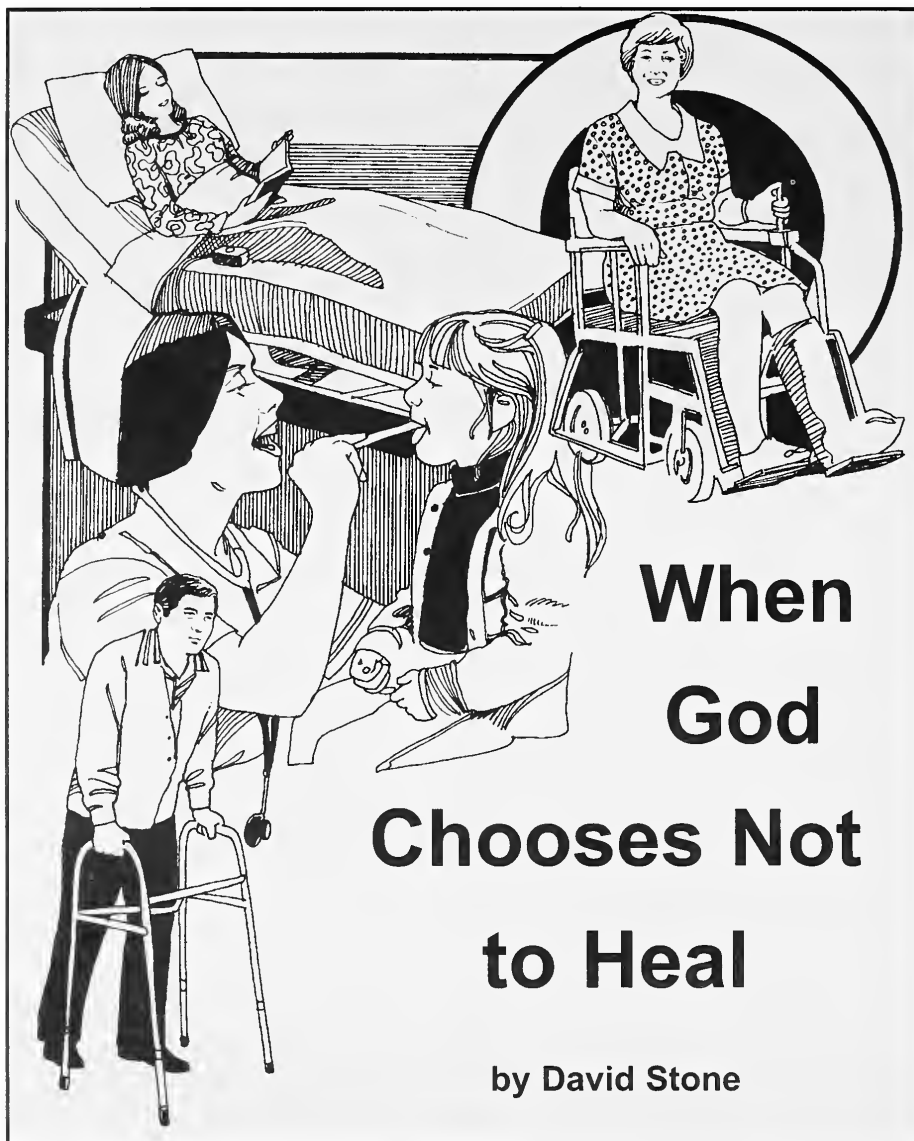
While admitting that there is a cost to doing what God has called us to do, he asked, "What is the cost of disobeying God?" Steve went on to say, "You know what Jim Elliot said about [sacrifice]. He said, 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.'

And that today is competing with, 'He who dies with the most toys wins.' And I suggest to you, there is a great deal of pressure on us today to give lip service to the one, but to act like the other."

He went on, "There are enough people in this room today to change the course of this world for Christ if we would just commit our lives to Him; and our fortunes; and our resources." He added, "God isn't a beggar. He'd give us back."

He has found this to be true in his own life—that God gives back. While living in the U.S., he always loved flying a plane, but he could never justify spending much time doing so. But one day in Ecuador, as he made his 23rd flight in one day, looking down on the jungle with some beautiful macaws flying below him, he thought, "Can it get any better than this?"

He concluded, "God doesn't want us to suffer for Him. He wants us to live for Him. His highest call isn't that we die for Him, but that we live for Him. And I think that the reason He used Dad and the others wasn't because they were willing to be martyrs, but because they were willing to give Him their lives and to live obediently. And then He said, 'I have something else that I want you to do.'" [†]



When God Chooses Not to Heal

by David Stone

JOYCE, a faithful Christian lady in the Sarasota First Brethren Church, was suffering from a life-threatening blood disease. A woman visited Joyce in the hospital and told her that her lack of faith was the only reason she had not been healed. Joyce dismissed this demeaning statement, but it could have been devastating to someone with less knowledge of the Bible.

An erroneous doctrine

This erroneous doctrine seems to be increasingly accepted among Christian groups. Even some Brethren elders are teaching it to their people. The purpose of this article is to suggest ways in which Brethren people can respond.

The Brethren Church has no creed, no list of beliefs that define us as a

group. We base our faith and practice on the Bible as a whole. This makes maintaining our common and distinctive set of beliefs more difficult. The Bible is much more complex and open to various interpretations than a simple list of beliefs. People can say they believe in the Bible but hold widely divergent views of truth.

We Brethren must maintain active and vigorous discussions about our beliefs, or we will cease to be a faith community. We will dissolve into a loosely-knit group of individuals with nothing in common except meaningless lip service to the Bible. Because we have no creed but the Bible, the Brethren can tolerate variant opinions on non-essential doctrines, but only if those opinions are biblically defensible.

The "health and wealth gospel" looks wonderful at first glance. It teaches that God wants us to be healthy and prosperous at all times. It seems logical and natural. God loves us very much, so why would He want us to be sick? It is also comforting. Unfortunately, it does not square with reality or with what the Bible teaches.

The book of Job and this error

The book of Job gives us the clearest and most thorough attack on the health and wealth gospel. The central theme of the book of Job is that God has reasons for our suffering that we can never understand. Job, a righteous man, suffered multiple tragedies. Four friends came to comfort him. They seemed to sincerely care for Job, for they sat with him in the dust for seven days and nights without even speaking.

Job finally broke the silence. He claimed that he had done nothing wrong. At least three of his friends dismissed this claim immediately. It seemed impossible to them that God would so inflict a righteous man. They assured Job that if he confessed and repented of whatever he had done wrong, God would restore him to his former state of blessing.

Their attempts to comfort Job just heaped abuse on him. The story reached its climax with the appearance of God, who quizzed Job about many of the mysteries of creation. Job finally realized that he could never understand the totality of God's plan, and he submitted to it.

God then commanded Job to pray for his friends, since their arguments had angered Him. God told one of them, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has" (Job 42:7*). Those who teach the health and wealth gospel are promoting the same error that God rejected thousands of years ago.

The disciples and this error

The disciples believed some form of the health and wealth gospel. Their belief system could not explain how a man could be born blind, since he could not have

**Quotations from the Bible are from the New International Version.*

committed any sin before he was afflicted. They could think of only two possibilities: the man had been punished in advance for his sins, or his blindness was to punish his parents for some sin of theirs.

Jesus completely rejected their thinking by answering that the man's blindness was not a punishment for sin at all. The man was born blind to show God's power.

Paul wrote that he had a thorn in his flesh. He did not specify what that thorn was, but the term seems to indicate a physical affliction. God was not the source of this thorn (Paul called it a messenger from Satan), but Paul knew that God had the power to remove it.

Paul asked God three times to remove it, but God refused. God's answer to Paul's request was, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul learned to humbly rely on God's power. God is more concerned with our character than with our comfort.

Suffering is normal

The Bible teaches that suffering is the normal state of believers. Peter wrote, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you" (1 Pet. 4:12). James wrote, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (Jas. 1:2-4). We should be less surprised by suffering than by its absence.

God does love you, and He wants to bless you. God would prefer for you to be healthy and wealthy, blessed in every way. But He knows that all of us are weak creatures, prone to become self-sufficient, proud, and spoiled. He wants most of all to be in relationship with you, so if suffering brings you closer to Him, He will allow it.

The only possible biblical support for the health and wealth gospel are those passages that tell of God's healing power. God does have the power to heal, and He uses that power every day. Brethren have

always believed in prayer for healing and even practice anointing with oil. In addition, the Bible does teach that lack of faith can be a hindrance to answered prayer. But neither of these truths proves the conclusion that God will always give physical healing to His faithful followers. He never promised that.

A double attack

It may seem kind and comforting when we make that promise on God's behalf, but it can be devastating if God does not heal physically and immediately. Many godly, faithful believers have been doubly attacked. First, Satan attacks them physically. Second, a would-be comforter blames them for their own affliction, saying that they are sick because their faith is insufficient.

Here is how Job replied to this accusation:

*I have heard many things like these;
miserable comforters are you all!
Will your long-winded speeches
never end?
What ails you that you keep on
arguing?
I also could speak like you,
if you were in my place;
I could make fine speeches against
you
and shake my head at you.
But my mouth would encourage
you;
comfort from my lips would
bring you relief.*

Job 16:2-5

Job is teaching his friends that it would be better to comfort and encourage the sufferer instead of accusing him of unfaithfulness.

Surrendering to God's will

Those who teach the health and wealth gospel often insult the faith of those who disagree with them. One preacher taught that only doubters end their prayers with the words, "Thy will be done." He said that it was an escape clause for those who do not believe God will answer prayer. He was wrong. It is a humble admission of our own fallibility and of God's wisdom. It is a surrendering of our will to God's will, the essence of Christian conversion and faith.

Those who believe God only when life is easy are the ones with weak faith. God wants people like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When told they had to worship the king's idol or be thrown into the fiery furnace, they replied:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

Daniel 3:16-18

These three men believed wholeheartedly that God had the power to save them (which He did). But they also trusted God whether He saved them or not. God wants you to believe He has the power to protect you and bless you. He also wants you to trust Him when he chooses not to end your suffering. He wants you to trust Him even when He does not explain.

Some of our suffering *is* caused by our sin. In that case, we should learn our lesson, repent, and ask God to help us deal with the consequences. Some of what we suffer, however, is not the result of our sin. In that case, we should remember that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

God can turn it into good

If God allows suffering to touch our lives, it is because He knows that He can turn it into something good for us. Knowing this does not take the pain away, but it probably makes it easier to handle.

We may never understand why we suffer certain things until we stand face-to-face with Jesus. He wants us to trust Him in the meantime. And when we deal with the suffering of others, it is better to offer sympathy and comfort than to give wise-sounding justifications, which may turn out to be wrong. [✠]

Rev. Stone is pastor of the First Brethren Church of Sarasota, Fla.

What College Should I Attend?

By Emanuel W. Sandberg

WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME, "What college should I attend?" I am apt to respond very quickly, "Well, I think that our school—Ashland University—is the one I would pick, particularly for an undergraduate program."

I answer this way not just because of my prejudice as a trustee of Ashland University; or because Ashland University has a beautiful campus; or because of our award-winning food service; or because of the impressive work of the Christian ministries on the university campus. I don't even give this answer because Ashland University was founded by, and is still affiliated with, The Brethren Church. My answer is based on the fact that Ashland University is dedicated to helping each student **develop** his or her **potential** for a lifetime of achievement and success.

Ashland University is different

There are thousands of colleges and universities across our country, but most of them focus on educational processes, academic classes, labs, papers, and tests. I believe Ashland University is different because

we think that a person's character is at least as important as a person's marketability. At Ashland University, our philosophical dedication to "Accent on the Individual" will not be compromised.

A place to develop potential

In most areas of life, individual potential is not the demonstration of knowledge, no matter how technically complex or advanced that knowledge might be. Personal development resulting from academic training is not the discovery and polishing of existing abilities. Rather, it is the development within a person of the potential to acquire the skills which that person will need to meet the tests he or she will encounter throughout the rest of life.

A university should not be a place to test whether a student is endowed with "the right stuff" for success. Rather it should be a place to **add value** to a person's life by helping that person develop leadership potential; by empowering that person with the ability to bring about change; by enabling that person to learn from adversity and mistakes;

Dr. Sandberg is Executive Director of The Brethren Church and chairman of the Board of Trustees of Ashland University.



and by preparing that person to develop new skills when an increasingly complex social or economic system requires those skills.

From its founding in 1878 by The Brethren Church, Ashland University has been committed at all levels to helping students realize their full potential. This includes not only their potential in terms of academic achievement, but also in terms of spiritual development and the development of their total personality. Personal contacts with faculty and staff help to create a safe and supportive environment in which students can make new friends, deepen their faith, and learn to accept new challenges.

Most people develop their philosophy of living and set their life goals during their college years. College is where most people begin making their life-shaping decisions and also where they begin accepting responsibility for their actions.

An academic base

Ashland University's undergraduate programs are designed to prepare graduates for a wide range of employment opportunities. The university provides students with the academic base to pursue professional training in virtually any field—from business to government and from education to medicine—as well



Many Ashland University students have their first serious encounter with God's Word in Bible classes like this one taught by Brethren faculty member Dr. Donald Rinehart, professor of religion at AU.

"Ashland University is dedicated to helping each student develop his or her potential for a lifetime of achievement and success."

as a wide range of assignments in the field of Christian service.

But for me, the important thing is the opportunity AU students have to develop their total life potential. "Accent on the Individual" in Ashland University's academic settings helps a student to develop:

- An ability to identify the most important part of a problem or an issue and to see the problem from a broader perspective
- A willingness to take personal risks by going against consensus standards and taking stands according to personal beliefs
- An ability to work with a wide variety of people, getting the best out of them even in situations where conflict exists
- A sensitivity to cultural differences and a willingness to work to understand such differences
- A dedication to truth and honesty, and a willingness to take personal responsibility for one's actions
- A willingness to make a commitment to the success of "the organization" and to have a positive impact on other people
- An openness to search for new opportunities to learn, to do new things, and to develop new skills as the world changes
- A willingness to handle criticism as a learning experience and to learn from mistakes without becoming disheartened

By treating each person as an individual with lifelong potential, Ashland University adds new value to a college education. Students develop new self-confidence, new reasoning capabilities, new sensitivity to others, new drive, new goal orientation, and new awareness of social and economic changes.

Church/University relationship

Ever since the founding of Ashland University by The Brethren Church in 1878, the relationship of the church to the university has been an important one, helping to shape the mission, core values, and programs of the university. We are

proud of that heritage. We are also proud of the high quality educational programs—which are offered in a context that emphasizes the importance of and a reliance on Judeo-Christian values.



Brethren faculty member Dr. Jeff Weidenhamer, professor of chemistry at AU, looks on as Brian Howman conducts an experiment.

As Ashland University has entered the 1998–1999 academic year, it is probably better positioned to fulfill its academic mission than at any time since its founding 120 years ago. The university in recent years has improved the quality and variety of its academic programs, its financial stability, its facilities, and its ability to support the computer needs of its students. It has also improved its ability to attract and to retain high-quality faculty and staff members.

AU's undergraduate enrollment reached almost 2,000 students when classes began in September. Total enrollment of both undergraduate and graduate students will be approximately 5,600, including about 700 graduate students at Ashland Theological Seminary, a graduate division of the university.

I believe these students will have a wonderful year at AU. They will find a faculty, staff, and administration of extraordinary people who

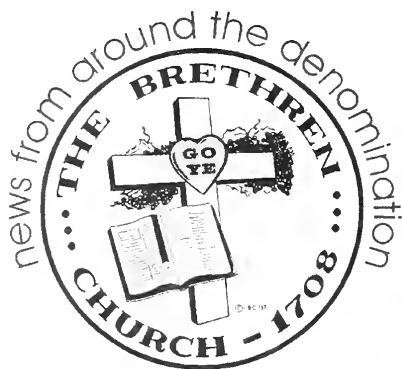
are committed to a common, exceptional purpose. They will have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of athletic and cultural activities. They will have the opportunity to hear and learn from several respected national figures, including William Bennett, former Secretary of Education and author of *The Book of Virtues*; United States Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas; and William Kristol, editor and publisher of *The Weekly Standard*.

Not only is Ashland University a strong academic institution, it is also a place where Christian experience is encouraged and nurtured. Numerous activities on campus foster spiritual growth. HOPE Fellowship provides opportunities for students to be involved in worship teams, drama teams, mission experiences, Bible studies, and social gatherings. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes offers weekly chapel meetings and six distinct Bible studies. The Brethren Connection has been established to relate Brethren students with Brethren families in the Ashland area. And on Sunday mornings, worship services are available at the University Church on campus and at two other fine Brethren congregations in Ashland.

What about cost?

What about cost? "Too high!" we all say. But the university has a generous program of financial aid based on need and previous academic performance. Furthermore, the net cost at Ashland must be weighed against the value added to one's life by receiving an education at Ashland University.

Why should AU be the college of choice for Brethren students? Because at Ashland University, the accent is on the individual—**the accent is on you!** If you are considering a college education, come and visit the Ashland University campus and talk to students, faculty, and staff members. See for yourself what Ashland University has to offer **you**. [†]



Teen preaches at West Alex.

West Alexandria, Ohio — While Rev. David Oligee, pastor of the First Brethren Church in West Alexandria, has been recuperating from July 13th bypass surgery, other ministers in the congregation have been filling the pulpit.

On September 6, Joe Hale, Rev. Oligee's nephew (his wife's sister's son), was the speaker. Joe is just 14 years old! Though only a freshman in high school, Joe believes that he has heard God's call to preach God's Word. And he has already begun!

— reported by Audrey Gilbert



Floods rage in Bangladesh

Wheaton, Ill. — World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is providing emergency food, water purification tablets, and other relief supplies to families in five areas of Bangladesh, a country experiencing the longest lasting flood in its history.

As of early September, more than 800 people had died and 35 million were displaced or marooned by rains that began in **July**. "Almost one and a half months have passed and the situation is getting worse every day," a project manager told World Relief headquarters on September 10. More than three-quarters of the country was underwater.

Our contributions to Brethren World Relief throughout the year help support the work of World Relief of NAE in Bangladesh and other needy areas of the world. [✠]



Brethren in Jamaica are (front, l. to r.) Tony & Geneva Price, Ernest & Dolly Zerbe, Patsy LeMaster; DeAnn & Gene Oburn, (back) Ben Pippen, Mandi Huff, and Sara Naylor.

Ten Brethren take mission trip to Jamaica

Bunker Hill, Ind. — Last July, ten Brethren spent two weeks in Jamaica on the first-ever overseas Summer Ministries mission trip sponsored by The Brethren Church.

To make this trip possible, The Brethren Church worked in cooperation with Christian Service International (CSI). Headquartered in Muncie, Ind., CSI sends mission teams to needy areas both in the U.S. and around the world.

In Miami, Fla., the ten Brethren joined a group of more than 100 other Christians. This group, ranging in age from 10 to 86, was from all over the U.S. and from at least nine denominations. From Miami, they all flew to Kingston, Jamaica, where they were taken by vans to the Port Antonio area, their center of activities for the next two weeks.

One of the ten Brethren, Patsy LeMaster from the Loree Brethren Church (Bunker Hill, Ind.), headed up a team of six who led a VBS for children in a village called Berrydale. Brethren serving with her on this team were Sara Naylor, also from the Loree Church, and Mandi Huff and Ben Pippen, from the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church.

To reach Berrydale, the team drove to the Rio Grande River, crossed the river on a raft, and climbed a stretch of mountain on foot. This they did twice a day every day—in the morning for VBS and in the evening for a family worship service. The team members shared the love of Jesus with the children and families of this Jamaican mountain village. In

turn, they were blessed daily by the eagerness of the children and the friendliness of the Jamaican people.

The remaining six Brethren—Tony and Geneva Price of Trinity Brethren Church (Canton, Ohio) and Ernest and Dolly Zerbe and Gene and DeAnn Oburn of Loree—were part of a 20-member music/evangelism team. Geneva Price became director of the choir when the intended director had to return to the U.S. soon after arriving in Jamaica.

The mission of the choir was to share Jesus' love and the message of salvation with non-believers and to encourage Jamaican Christians in their walk with the Lord. The choir sang in churches and in a prison and an orphanage. Gene, Tony, and three other pastors in the choir presented messages, and many other choir members gave testimonies.

"For the ten of us Brethren, our time in Jamaica was an exciting and rich opportunity to serve the Lord and to reach out beyond our comfort zones in His precious name," said DeAnn Oburn. "To our prayer warriors," she added, "we express our very deep thanks for your prayers . . . To The Brethren Church, we give our special thanks for making this opportunity possible for each of us. And to **all** who read this article, we encourage you to consider God's call on your life to participate in a short-term mission experience sometime, somewhere. It will be life-changing and more rewarding than you can imagine!"

— reported by DeAnn Oburn



Brethren in New Lebanon plan church history month

New Lebanon, Ohio — Members of The Brethren Church in New Lebanon will spend several Sundays in October and November reviewing and renewing the vision of our forefathers for The Brethren Church during what they have designated as "Church History Month."

On Sunday, October 11, the focus will be on "The Beginning" (1700s). Guest speaker will be Dr. Charles Munson, past professor at Ashland Theological Seminary, now retired.

"Challenges and Triumphs" (1800s) will be the topic on October 18. Rev. Donald Rowser, pastor of the New Lebanon congregation from 1965 to 1985 will be the guest speaker.

"Brethren Women" in Brethren history will be in the spotlight on October 25. Appropriately, a Brethren woman, Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, provost at Ashland University, will be the speaker.

On November 1, "The Church in the 1900s" will be the theme. Charles Wiltrout, former associate pastor and current member of the New Lebanon congregation, will speak.

The History of The Brethren Church in New Lebanon will be reviewed on November 8. Rev. Richard Winfield, editor of *THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST* and a "son" of the New Lebanon church, will speak.

The series will climax on Sunday, November 15, with Homecoming. Rev. Lynn Mercer, pastor of the Gretna Brethren Church and former associate pastor at New Lebanon, will be the morning speaker. A carry-in dinner will follow the service.

The Outreach Committee of the New Lebanon Church extends a special invitation to Brethren of other congregations to join the New Lebanon Brethren for all or some of these special events. The Sunday worship services begin at 10:30 a.m.

— reported by Bettie Glanton

Brethren at Pennsylvania District Conference hear good news of positive things happening

The following article about this year's Pennsylvania District Conference—held July 24-25—appeared in the August newsletter of the Pleasant View Brethren Church. It was written by Pastor T.J. McLaughlin, and is reprinted here (with a few editorial changes) with his permission.

WE HAVE RETURNED from the mountain,* and we come with good news! District Conference was a blessing this year. I will try to recap what took place for those who were not able to attend.

It was a pleasure to hear about the positive things that are happening in The Brethren Church. We had the opportunity to hear and meet with Allen Baer, who has returned from the mission field in Argentina, and also from Rev. José

**The Pennsylvania District Conference is held at Camp Peniel, near Mt. Davis—the highest point in Pennsylvania.*



During one of the business sessions at General Conference in August, Rev. G. Bright and Luella Hanna were given special recognition for being in attendance at their 51st consecutive Brethren General Conference. Rev. Hanna, who is now retired, served as a pastor for many years in The Brethren Church. The Hannas now live in Marion, Indiana. Their son, Joseph, is also a Brethren pastor. He serves the Mulvane, Kansas, Brethren Church.

Rivero, president of The Brethren Church in Argentina. The Brethren Church there is now able to train its own pastors and leaders in Argentina. Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Brethren Missionary Ministries, challenged each district church to hold a yearly missions conference. In addition, we heard about the church-planting efforts across the U.S.

Dr. Lee Solomon, Director of Development at Ashland Theological Seminary, encouraged us to consider giving to the work of the kingdom. That can happen by designating a portion or percentage of our estate to some ministry in The Brethren Church: Ashland Theological Seminary, Brethren Missions, your local church, or some other ministry. Dr. Solomon shared with us some of the future plans for ATS and how that is going to be beneficial to the local church. You will be hearing more about these plans.

Rev. Dave Cooksey encouraged the district churches to love their pastors. On a lesser note, Rev. Cooksey reminded us that the Pennsylvania District showed a loss in membership on the statistical report in 1997—a trend that I believe is about to change!

Dr. Buzz Sandberg challenged us to evaluate ourselves, and our ministries, before God. In addition Dr. Sandberg invited everyone to attend General Conference this year. He said, "If you attend this year's Conference you will leave a changed person."

The conference voted, by an overwhelming majority, to grant church status to the Three Seasons Church pastored by Rev. Bryan Karchner. This is a new church, which is an offshoot of the Berlin Brethren Church.

Also, the conference voted to change the tenure of the moderator tract to two-year terms. A motion to change the conference to a one-day business conference was withdrawn after discussion. It was suggested, however, that the Executive Committee study the possibilities of a one-day business conference. [✠]



In Memory

Rev. Donald O. Siders, 73, former pastor of the Wabash, Ind., First Brethren Church, died August 7 following a struggle with cancer.

He was born November 10, 1924, in Peru, Indiana. On December 28, 1949, he married Mary E. Brinson, who survives him.

A Navy veteran, he had worked at Honeywell's and Stone Industries and retired from Swingline Manufacturing in 1989. He began pastoring the Wabash First Brethren Church in 1988 and was ordained there June 24, 1990. He served the congregation nine years.



He is survived by his wife, four sons, a daughter, 13 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held August 11 with Rev. Gerald Zook, current pastor at Wabash Brethren, presiding. Memorial contributions may be made to the Wabash Church.

* * * * *

Mayme L. Schubert, 85, a member of the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church, died July 3. She was the wife of Rev. Robert Schubert, who serves as associate pastor at Lanark First Brethren.

Mayme Randecker was born December 22, 1912, in Woodland Township, Ill. She and Robert were married January 22, 1938. They were parents of one daughter and foster parents of four boys and one girl. She is survived by her husband and daughter, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Her funeral service was held July 7 at Lanark First Brethren Church, with Lanark Pastor Jim Garrett and Chaplain Don Swanson of Freeport Memorial Hospital officiating. Memorial contributions may be made in her name to the First Brethren Church India Mission.

National Youth Leadership

A new horizon awaits the young people of The Brethren Church. A fresh commitment to spiritual formation, disciple-making, empowered ministry, servant leadership, and leadership development is the focus and the challenge ahead of us. To rise to meet this future, leadership will be the key.

Therefore, the National BYIC program is seeking someone to bring visionary leadership to Brethren young people. This person must bring a heart's desire for all that God is doing through our youth. Passionate leadership and guidance and coordination of programming are a must.

If you have this passion and a sense of God's anointing for this task, **first** seek the Lord, praying fervently for insight and understanding of God's will. And then, **second**, contact Rev. David L. West at The Brethren Church National Office and inquire about this position. [†]

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A newsletter for Brethren people

November 1998

It Takes a Family of Faith

By Emanuel W. Sandberg

FOR MANY YEARS I HAVE watched the moral standards and the standards of personal behavior in our country decline. That decline is illustrated by an article in the October 19, 1998, issue of *USA Today*, which reports the results of a large survey of middle-school and high-school students, conducted by the Josephson Institute for Ethics.

Most of the students surveyed said that it is important to be a person of "good character." Yet nearly half of those students said that they had stolen something in the last year. Seventy percent admitted to cheating on an exam. Over 90 percent confessed to lying to their parents.

All of us know the statistics of social decline and the bitter fruit we are harvesting, which will be passed on to our children and to our children's children. I am ashamed to say that I have been quick to blame the foundation institutions of our nation for the moral decay of our society.

When asked what forces in society are causing the moral decline, I have been quick to blame **television**, for brain-washing children to accept gutter levels of behavior and the absence of God as the standards of late 20th-century life; our **schools**, for eliminating prayer and the presence of God from education and for failing to reinforce the traditional moral standards of society; and our **government's leaders**, for failing to provide positive moral leadership and instead developing programs that are in opposition to the standards and desires of families committed to raising morally upright children.

All of my quick criticisms are true to a substantial degree. But the most important questions we need to ask

are these: How did our world get this way? and **What are we doing** to renew our society?

Changes in the social network

Most people over 50 years of age grew up in a social system in which the moral standards for personal behavior were influenced primarily by (1) the family, (2) the church, and (3) the schools. Radio, newspapers, books, magazines, and movies were monitored under laws and standards that tended to make them mirrors of long-existing conservative social standards. Peer groups also influenced behavior, but the peer groups tended to be built within the extended family or from church or school-sponsored groups.

The pattern of social change that took place after World War II was dramatic—perhaps revolutionary. Consider the following:

- The extended family became geographically dispersed. Brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins moved, seeking new economic opportunities. The social support system for many people became weakened and less effective.
- Television and other mass media became major influences on American society. Television por-

trays violence, infidelity, and indiscriminate sex openly, thus revising the values that had been the hallmark of our society for generations.

- Parents from godly homes, while still professing their belief in God, have compromised their faith and dedicated themselves to achieving success—defined in terms of money, possessions, prestige, and power. Many parents don't have time for each other, let alone time for their children—not even to mention time for the children of their brothers and sisters and those of their neighborhood and their church.

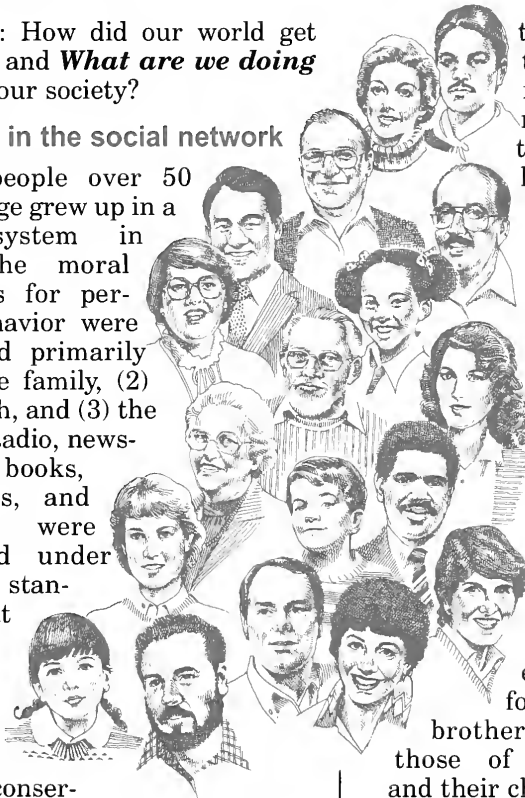
- Some churches are still filled with people who honor God and His Word and who live to serve Him. Sadly, however, many churches are filled in part with people who

(continued on next page)

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue



know God but who are lukewarm in their service to Him. But worst of all, there are many Protestant churches in which the Bible is regarded as a relic of older times and where the members have turned from biblical standards and are following the decaying standards of the secular world.

- Our public schools no longer reflect in practice the moral standards which undergirded the formation of our country. They have succumbed to pressure campaigns to offer sex education; to teach tolerance of homosexual lifestyles; to eliminate God and prayer from the schools; and to make rules of conduct the product of consensus, or worse, personal opinion.
- Government has banned God from public celebrations, public displays, and as a determinant for standards of public morality. As a result, we permit abortion on demand and euthanasia on request.

Changes in society such as those outlined above have created for the youth and adults of the late 20th century a completely new set of influences that determine the moral and behavioral standards of our day. Movies, television, computer networks, and other mass media systems are the dominant influences on most people, replacing the family and the church from the roles they played since the time of Abraham.

Unfortunately, our churches have not been equipped to confront and counter the forces that are responsible for the deterioration of moral standards and the change in societies core values. Nor have our churches been led to maintain (let alone expand) the positive influence they exerted on moral standards and family well-being a half century ago.

Instead, the major influences on the lifestyle of most people today are: (1) the mass media, (2) peer groups (particularly on young people, but also on adults of all ages), and (3) schools (but schools operating from a different moral base than in the past).

Where do we go from here?

We are survivors of an earthquake that has destroyed the foundation of our society. Godly parents are still raising godly children, but they do so against increasingly tough opposition. Parents who live a godly life still need to understand that their children live in a world that is not God-centered. Therefore, parents, by example and instruction, must help their children pursue truth and not agree with all that they hear (1 Peter 3:15; John 8:32); to affirm core values and basic beliefs until they become convictions; and to act in love (Rom. 12:10 & 13:8; Luke 6:27-33; 1 Cor. 13:4-7).

For persons to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible, they must have a family life that provides a high level of love and support. The family members must be able to communicate with one another in positive ways, and the children must be willing to seek the advice and counsel of their parents.

But what happens when a young person is not home, or when the parents are working or are, for whatever reason, absent from the home? Before the social earthquake, most people had an "extended family"—relatives, neighbors, close friends—who provided children with love, guidance, and on-site direction in place of the parents. But for most people today, that extended family no longer exists.

I submit that what we need today for the healthy development of a child is for that child to be reared by a **family of faith**. A family of faith is a group of people, young and old, who hold similar beliefs and core values, who care deeply for each other, who act on their convictions, and who stand firm for their beliefs. The family of faith provides additional adult relationships that reinforce and support parents and children. The family of faith allows young and old to experience a caring neighborhood. And the members of the family of faith are actively involved in helping young people succeed and in providing a caring, encouraging environment.

A family of faith is a group of people who are brought together by common interests and goals. They share common values and moral standards. They may live in the same neighborhood or town. They care about each other and support and encourage one another. They empower each other to accomplish personal objectives. And what is most important, they share a common faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

A family of faith is a workable alternative to the household of the Old Testament and to the extended family that was common in America before the social earthquake of the 20th century. The family of faith is a workable model for the small group you should develop or join in your local Brethren church.

In my opinion, it will take a family of faith to raise a healthy, caring, and responsible child in the world of the 21st century! [✚]

Dr. Sandberg serves as Executive Director for The Brethren Church.

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Pontius' Puddle

SOME SAY THAT THE GREATEST CRISIS FACING THE CHURCH TODAY IS TURMOIL WITHIN THE FAMILY. I, FOR ONE, DISAGREE.



I'M ON GOOD TERMS WITH ALL MY SIBLINGS AND STEP-SIBLINGS, AND I KEEP IN TOUCH WITH BOTH MY PARENTS' EX-SPOUSES.



WHY, I EVEN GET ALONG WITH THE COUSINS OF MY HALF SISTER THROUGH HER BIOLOGICAL MOTHER'S SIGNIFICANT OTHER!



© Joel Kauffman

Made Lovely by Love

By Dan Lawson

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25-27, NIV

WE TALKED last month about the fact that Christ-like love is sacrificial and that we should examine ourselves before we find fault with our spouse. I am reminded that Christ said that we should *first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye* (Matt. 7:5, NIV).

This month I would like to look at the effects Christ-like love can have on marriage. To fully understand what this love can do for our marriages, let's first look at what Christ's love has done for us as individuals.

His love makes us holy

Holiness is the result of God's choosing us, not the basis of that choice. What this means is that we do not have to live up to His expectations in order for Him to choose us as His children.

When I invite non-Christians to attend church services, they often make the excuse that they will come as soon as they "clean up their lives." In other words, they believe that they have to earn the right to come before God. Deep down inside they feel that they are not good enough to come to church and to seek God's blessing.

What they—and all of us—need to understand is that we are made holy not because of what we do, but because God loves us. I am not

holy because I go to church and read the Bible. I am holy because Jesus has made me so by sacrificing Himself for me.

Let me illustrate it this way: While I was in Chicago recently, I saw an exhibition of art work. To me, this art was a conglomeration of junk thrown together and labeled "art." I saw absolutely no value in it. Yet it sold for thousands of dollars!

"When we read that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, we can begin to understand that it is the husband's love which makes his wife lovely."

Now I ask you, what is it about a pile of junk that makes it worth thousands of dollars? Obviously, it is worth that much only if someone is willing to pay that much for it. Therefore it can be argued that it is not the item itself which is valuable. Rather, the person who buys it assigns value to it.

Let's take this argument back to our concept of holiness. We can now understand that it is not what we do that makes us holy, but rather the fact that Jesus was willing to give His life for us.

A successful marriage

Similarly, when we apply this concept to our text, we begin to understand the basis for a successful marriage. When we read that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, we can begin to understand that it is the husband's love which makes his wife lovely. She is not responsible to "earn" his love in order to be con-

sidered lovely. Instead, he should freely give his love, just as Christ loves the church.

It has been said that every man wants a "trophy babe" on his arm so that he can be the envy of every other man. But the truth about this illusion is that beauty is only skin deep. This means that in a Christian marriage we do not marry simply because of physical beauty, although that can be a wonderful benefit. Rather, we marry because of love. And it is not a ravishing body that makes a wife beautiful to a godly husband, but rather she is beautiful because he loves her. It is his love for her that gives her worth in his eyes.

His love makes us blameless

Not only has the love of Christ made us holy and, therefore, worthy in His sight, but Christ's sacrificial love on the cross has also made us blameless. What this means is that when God looks at us, He does not see the sins and faults that we really have, but instead, He sees only the righteousness of Christ.

Too often in marriage we consciously or subconsciously keep a running log of all our mate's faults. Consequently, when we get into an argument with our spouse, we tend to grab this log and use it as a club with which to bludgeon the one we claim to love.

But instead of doing this, we need to let the Christ-like love that is in us cover all the faults of the one we love. When we do this, we will no longer be able to see our mate's faults. We will only see the brilliancy of love. [†]



Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one of a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.



A Thanksgiving Meal With a Purpose

(Making
One Big Family
Out of
Little Ones)

By Marlene LeFever

When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.

— words from the Master

THIS HOSPITALITY IDEA is not just intended to encourage a group of friends to have a dandy time together. Instead it is designed to meet one of the following objectives:

- To give Christians a tool to reach out to our unbelieving friends and neighbors, to open the possibility of Jesus Christ to them through a planned hospitality event in our home or church.
- To grow friendships among church people through a hospitality event in our home or the church, building up the family of God.

Objective: Singles, small families, and foreign families without Thanksgiving traditions will combine resources at a Thanksgiving

meal. Together everyone will praise God for His bounty this year.

Basic idea: Everyone will provide one dish to add to the Thanksgiving meal; the host family will supply the turkey. By combining resources, the meal will not be expensive.

My husband Jack and I decided to go through the church directory and invite all the singles, foreign families, and small families. We figured nearly everyone would have a place to go already, so we could safely invite as many as we wanted to.

We were flabbergasted when the calls began to arrive!

"Thanks so much," a woman from Australia said. "We'll all come. We were wondering how Americans did this holiday, but we never thought we'd be able to find out."

"I'll be there with the kids," another woman said. "I didn't have money for the trip to my folks' place in Georgia. It's great to have something special to do close to home."

A guy announced that he'd bring real mashed potatoes. "I was feeling a little family-less," he said.

This Thanksgiving party is the only one we've had where I have no idea how many people actually showed up. It was in the neighborhood of sixty, give or take a dozen kids. When the crowd filled our place, Diana, the neighbor across the hall, opened her doors for the overflow. Then the lady upstairs opened her place. Thank goodness we lived in an apartment building! A house would never have been big enough.

Nametags: A must! Ours were little drawings of fat pilgrims. Each said, "In case you've forgotten, I'm (person's name)."

Choral Reading: Before the meal, we gave all readers a copy of a Thanksgiving choral reading. We had contacted a few friends before the meal, and they were ready with short personal statements.

Host: Lord, You have poured out amazing blessings on this land! You have poured down your blessings on the land and it yields its bountiful crops.

All: Lord, You have poured out amazing blessings on this land! Now bring us back to loving You.

Friend: Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Give a joyous shout in honor of our God!

All sing: "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come."

Hostess: God said, "What I want from you is your true thanks."

Friend: Father, I thank You because . . . (This person should complete the sentence with a personal reason for thanking the Lord this year.)

All: Sing your praise accompanied by music from the harp. Let the cornets and trumpets shout! Make a joyful symphony before the Lord, our King! Let the sea in all its vastness roar with praise! Let the earth and all those living on it shout, "Glory to the Lord."

Friend: Glory to the lord! Let the waves clap their hands in glee, and the hills sing out their songs of joy before the Lord.

Friend: Father, I praise You because . . .

Friend: Glory to the Lord.

Friend: Father, I praise You because . . .

All: Sing the doxology, perhaps to one of the newer melodies, as the Thanksgiving prayer.

And then we ate! There was more than enough for all. Jack had made two turkeys, and their total forty pounds was perfect. Actually, with all the great things others brought,

I don't think anyone would have minded if we had run out of turkey.

Some of our neighbors were older women who were spending the holidays with their children. When they heard about our enormous party, four people offered their door keys and ovens even though they would not be able to attend.

Don't skip a little Thanksgiving program and head immediately for the turkey. For four years, I planned a Thanksgiving in September for a group of Christians from developing nations who were in the States for training. The first year, I figured I'd be busy with the food so I suggested a friend handle the Thanksgiving-specific stuff.

She prayed and thanked God for the food. For the foreign guests, the meal was just a big American spread. They never heard about its history or its significance to Americans and Canadians, or, most especially, the added significance Christians give to it. They stuffed themselves, following our example, I'm sure. But they never were rewarded spiritually. The next three years, I gave the food to friends to prepare and I han-

Pilgrim Scavenger Hunt

Here's the scavenger hunt list we used. It is adapted to the area in which we lived—about two blocks from a railroad track in a suburban community. Change anything you couldn't find in your community.

1. One wild turkey feather or unreasonable facsimile.
2. A Pilgrim's Pet Rock. Be prepared to demonstrate a trick it can do.
3. Ten different types of leaves from the dense forests hereabouts.
4. One forked stick that would be perfect for killing snakes.
5. One piece of post-Indian litter.
6. One hat camouflaged to avoid detection in hostile Indian territory.
7. One coin of this kingdom.
8. One Thanksgiving carol sung before a neighbor's house. Have astonished neighbor sign his/her name here (not that Pilgrims are not to be trusted!).

9. One musket ball or one round button.
10. Any tree's berry.
11. Any small weed—roots and all—that grows down by the iron horse's tracks.
12. A four-line poem in rhyming couplet about Thanksgiving.
13. Number of steps around our settlement (this block).
14. Piece of wood to add to winter's fuel supply.
15. A friendly hello to a Pilgrim stranger on the street. Name of the thrilled person.
16. Names of all churches within five minutes of our front door.
17. Scalp count—one gray hair, one red hair, one blond hair, one brown hair.
18. Scout around—one thumbprint in a mud ball.
19. Pilgrim panic—something growing outside that you could eat in a pinch.
20. Anything that rhymes with pie—and come back for dessert!

dled the program. Thanksgiving is a concept I'd like to share with friends around the world.

Pilgrim Scavenger Hunt: In between the main course and the desert, we needed to clear dozens of people out of the apartments for a

few minutes so we would have space to reorganize. So the entire group was divided into Pilgrim Scavenger Hunt groups. Children were all included.

For some adults, especially those without kids, it was the first time they had worked hand in hand with youngsters. It was fun to see these randomly chosen people become competitive, enthusiastic groups. They all left cheering and insisting that their group would be back first with all the items needed to win the Pilgrim Scavenger Hunt (see box above).

I had the first group that came back show what they had collected, then I awarded them each a chocolate turkey. But people from the losing groups were still complaining *months later* that they had written wonderful rhyming couplets and had developed excellent rock tricks that they hadn't had an opportunity to show off. So if you copy our Thanksgiving party, don't copy our mistake. Wait until all groups are back, and then allow creative people from each group to share what they have done. [✚]

Reprinted from Parties With a Purpose: Laying the Groundwork for Discipleship & Evangelism by Marlene LeFever, Cook Ministry Resources. Ms. LeFever is Director of Church Relations for David C. Cook Church Ministries. She is also author of Creative Teaching Methods and Learning Styles. Used by permission. (Article provided by the publisher.)

WCST WCRH WHAG WJEJ
WDJD WARX WDJS WCKY

THREE of the above are not radio or television stations. Can you find them? One of these "call letters" has become quite popular in Christian circles. You see the letters on T-shirts, key ring medallions, bracelets, and necklaces. They form an acrostic for "What Would Jesus Do?"

A book of fiction based on this question became a classic in Christian literature. Called *In His Steps*, it has been read by millions in its 100-year history. By asking the question, people generally have been helped in making good decisions and in becoming more considerate, helpful, selfless, and upright.

For all of its benefits, however, the question (or rather the approach to ethical decisions based on the question) has its limitations. The simple truth is that we don't always know what Jesus would do in any given situation. Who could have predicted that He would make a leather whip and drive out sheep and oxen from the temple and upset the tables of moneychangers?

WJTM WWJD WQCM WAYZ
WETA WFRE WARK WWMD

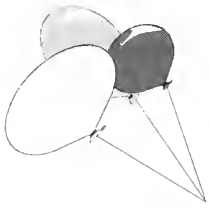
Jesus didn't always do what *we* might consider to be nice, kind, considerate, and helpful. Sometimes He used harsh words on people and called them names to their faces!

So I have added two other stations' "call letters" to the list: WDJD and WDJS. "What Did Jesus Do?" "What Did Jesus Say?" It seems to me that a careful consideration of Jesus' actions and words might afford us a more reliable basis for ethical decisions than the more subjective approach of WWJD?

I am under no delusion that my suggested "call letters" will replace WWJD or that they will make it to the commercial market of T-shirts or bracelets. But I hope they help us to think more deeply about the basis of ethical formulations. If we know more clearly WDJD and WDJS, we will more likely know WWJD.

— Dr. Brian Moore

Dr. Moore pastors the St. James, Md., Brethren Church. This article first appeared in the church's newsletter. Used with permission.



Celebrating the Birth of Two Grace Community Church

IT WAS 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 27, 1998, at Armel Elementary School in Winchester, Virginia, site of the grand opening of Grace Community Church. A year's worth of prayer and preparation was on the line as core members of the new congregation waited in eager expectation to see what kind of church would be born.

Everything was in place: the sound and band equipment, the lights, the information table, the bookstore, and the signs out on the highway. Adventure Land, a ministry for children from kindergarten through fifth grade, was set up and ready. The technical team (which operates the computer graphics, stage lights, sound, and video) was ready to go. Greeters were in place from the parking lot to the auditorium, where background music was playing softly.

The questions on everyone's mind were these: Had we read the community correctly? Were we responding to the community's real issues? We'd know soon enough.

In the weeks prior to this day we had mailed 18,000 postcards to people in neighborhoods in and around Winchester. The cards invited people to a church—a church that would love them for who they are; a church that would offer God's unconditional love. And now we waited.



About 9:40 cars began to arrive. The first contained some Brethren well-wishers from the Southeastern District. Then came people who were there for the first time. By 10:05 a.m. there were 130 people in the school—110 adults and 20 children—ranging in age from six months to 92 years.

The worship service began with a video of core members talking about what had drawn them to Grace Community Church. Then the band opened with a Russ Taff song, fittingly named "The Winds of Change." Following the song, Pastor Mike Woods welcomed all who were present, and then the Grace Band moved into praise music.

An offering was then taken, preceded by this comment: "If this is your first Sun-

day at Grace Community, we ask you not to give and instead to accept this service as our gift to you." Heather Scott sang a Margaret Becker song, "Honesty," as the offering was being received.

A drama followed—a monologue written and presented by Chris Scott entitled "I'm Still Trying, Dad." It told of a son's struggle to live up to his dad's expectations even after the dad had died.

Then Pastor Wood taught a message entitled "Measuring Up," which dealt with the contrast between performing for God versus accepting His grace.

Perhaps the most wonderful part of the morning was the way in which the newcomers stayed and stayed following the service. Many new friendships were formed that day. The comments that were made after the service seemed to center on one theme: "Thanks for having a church where I can come as I am and meet God!" [†]

— Rev. Mike Woods, Pastor

New Churches, New Life

One of the most treasured memories of a parent is the memory of the birth of a child. This past month I had the privilege to be present at two very special births; the birth of Grace Community Church in Winchester, Virginia, on September 27 and the birth of Rock Springs Community Church in Vista, California, on October 4.

The excitement surrounding these two events was felt by all who took part. The pace of the day was set in the pre-dawn hours during the set up of the portable places of worship. At both locations the core teams moved with precision and speed, as buildings designed for the education of minds were transformed into houses of worship for the transformation of hearts.

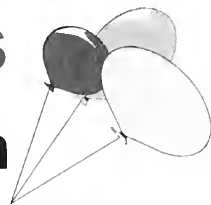
From my perspective, the most precious aspect of the birth of the two churches was the absolute dependency of the core members on the power of God's Holy Spirit. Two churches, two circles of prayer, one mind and heart: "God, we are gathered as you have called us, to worship and minister to those whom you love. Holy Spirit come with power."

The sense of expectancy was exhilarating. One could not



New Brethren Congregations

Rock Springs Community Church



YEA GOD! On October 4, 1998, God drew exactly 200 people to the birth of Rock Springs Community Church. God's heart for lost people was evident as Carolyn, Kimberly, Errol, and Lance responded to God's invitation, presented by Pastor Jim, to accept Christ. To date, 11 others have also prayed to receive Him. God is up to something!

Birth Sunday was one big Kodak moment! Let me paint the picture. The unifying theme was "How to Get Off the Performance Treadmill." The service opened with four people sitting on stools, center stage,

illuminated only by spotlights. Two vocalists accompanied by two acoustic guitars sang a contemporary song by Kim Hill—"Black Shirts." Then the house lights came on and Jamie Zile, our youth director, warmly welcomed guests, drawing their attention to an 11" by 17" "connection points" flyer informing them of the many ways they could get involved at Rock Springs.

The house lights were again lowered, and Stephanie Boyd and the band took over. They played five powerful songs that focused on our awesome God and His great love.

J a m i e was again in the spotlight as he read Psalm 8:3-4 and Romans 8:35, 37-39

from the *New Living Bible*. Then followed a poignant drama entitled *Driven*, about a man enslaved on a



performance treadmill who was destroying his family. The drama ended with the band playing "Slow Down" in the background as a little girl sat on a couch in the foreground, watching the clock and waiting for her daddy.

The drama hit home, and God opened many hearts to hear His word, as Pastor Jim presented the message. Near the end of that message, Stephanie played a song she had written—"Into Your Arms"—and Jim spoke between each chorus,

calling people to repent from their drivenness and to find significance in God. People repented and four prayed to receive Christ. Jamie announced next week's topic and the band ended the service with a jammin' tune entitled "He Arose!"

Since that Sunday, ten adults have expressed an interest in our one-on-one discipleship program. Several small groups have begun meeting, and several more will begin in the next few weeks. And we have more small-group leaders than

we need! God is up to something in The Brethren Church!

Pray for Rock Springs as we begin a class to help guests decide, "Is This Church for Me?" Pray for us also as we seek additional staff.

Because we are reaching so many non-Christian and unchurched people, it will be some time before they develop the discipline of tithing. Therefore we are dependent on outside supporters like you. We are praying specifically for one person who will make a 3-year commitment to help us with rent—\$1,500 a month for one year; \$1,000 a month the second year; and \$500 a month the third year.

"Impossible!" you say. You're right! That's exactly why we're asking. Man accomplishes the possible. God accomplishes the impossible. And He wants to do just that through The Brethren Church . . . and perhaps through someone like you! [✠]

— Rev. Jim Boyd, pastor

escape the realization that what was happening was not about those involved, but solely about the One in whose name they had gathered. Worship was exciting, inspiring. God was present, inhabiting the praises of His people. The numbers were exciting as well: a total of more than 300 people at the two locations!

The dedication and commitment of both core teams was the embodiment of what we say we are about as Brethren—the priesthood of all believers. God has called and equipped some incredibly talented people to serve these two new churches. Beyond their talent is the unmistakable evidence of their passionate love for their Lord and His church. That love is contagious. I pray that it permeates every district and every congregation in The Brethren Church.

I believe that these two "birthdays" are simply a taste of what God desires to do among the Brethren. God has prepared and sown seeds of ministry to be discovered and nurtured by His people (Eph. 2:10). I look forward with great anticipation to the new life God will breath into His people and His church. I think we ought to get ready to celebrate!

— Rev. David West, Director of United States Missions

World Relief: Churches helping churches meet human need

by Reilly R. Smith

WORLD RELIEF is the relief, development, and disaster response arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. World Relief represents Bible-believing churches all across the United States in their concern for people in need. World Relief brings the social implications of the gospel to bear on human needs in the United States and around the world.

Immediate help in crisis

World Relief offers immediate help to people in crisis—people facing famine, starvation, disease, war, displacement, etc. World Relief also works hard to help people prevent crisis and find permanent solutions

to crises. World Relief work includes business, agriculture, medical clinics, safe drinking water, and other community-development projects.

In addition, World Relief responds to natural disasters. Recently, the mayor of Miami-Dade County, Florida, named World Relief as one of the main agencies the county would use to send humanitarian aid to victims of Hurricane Georges in the Caribbean, because of World Relief's excellent track record in providing relief. (*See next page.*)

World Relief is churches helping churches. World Relief works through local churches, helping them meet human needs in their own communities in the United States and

around the world. World Relief channels its resources through Bible-preaching churches located in the area of need so that these churches can reach out to people with the gospel of Christ as they help to meet their needs.

The right hand of fellowship

Through World Relief, local churches in the United States extend the right hand of fellowship and help to local churches in other parts of the country and the world. World Relief operates through people who know and understand the needs of people in their own community. This ensures that our help empowers people instead of making

them dependent. It also ensures that help comes from God's people already present in their community. It strengthens the witness of the local church for Christ.

World Relief is The Brethren Church reaching out to Christians to help them make an immediate difference in the lives of suffering people — a difference that often lasts for eternity. Our relationship with World Relief dates back to the early sixties. The Brethren have been honored many times for our commitment to World Relief. We have often led the way among churches in denominational giving. Since its beginning, Brethren Mission in India has been working with World Relief. World Relief and the Brethren in India provide safe drinking water in two cities, free medi-

Cambodian children turn their hearts toward Jesus



More than 4,000 Cambodian children have turned their hearts toward Jesus because of a World Relief program that teaches them how to have healthy bodies and spotless hearts.

After decades of war and violence, Cambodia now has the highest childhood death rate in East Asia. In an effort to reduce that number, World Relief workers are using puppets, skits, and songs to entertain children while illustrating how to prevent some of the deadly illnesses.

During these weekly presentations in the squatter areas of Phnom Penh, the children also learn about the God who made them, loves them, and wants a relationship with them. An overwhelming 80 percent of these children have indicated that Jesus is now in their hearts. As they return to their homes, they spread the message to their parents and siblings.

Because most of these communities have no other Christian presence, World Relief brings in church planters to help new believers establish cell groups in the neighborhoods. In one year, six small churches have started. This year World Relief is expanding the program into an additional province to reach 50 percent more children.

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



November-December 1998

Volume 12, Number 2

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Holiday time is almost here! How fast the summer went! Thanksgiving! A wonderful time of year to give thanks. But where do we start? We have so many things to be thankful for; we just take for granted so many things. I was very guilty of that.

Being able to walk was just an everyday thing for me—until I could not walk without the aid of a walker or a cane. Then it became something to think about. Now every morning that my feet touch the floor, I say, "Thanks, Lord."

I have had good results from the Gamma Knife procedure and, as I write this, my ability to walk has returned and I use the cane just for balance, because of the medicine that makes me light-headed and dizzy at times. So I am very thankful for doctors and their medicines.

When American colonies were first settled, the newcomers suffered many hardships. They spent a lot of time in fasting and prayer. They asked the Lord to help them in their distress.

In one of the Daily Devotion booklets the story is told by Tom Olson of *NOW* magazine that on one occasion, when some New England settlers were discussing their hardships, one person suggested that they set aside a special day for fasting and prayer. Another man stood up and said they had been dwelling too much on their problems. It was

(continued on page 4)

OBEDIENCE

Devotions given by Sandra Sharp,
Dutchtown, at the Indiana District W.M.S. Conference, June 1998

(The W.M.S. theme was Being Obedient Women.

The first letter of each word spells BOW,
and the symbol of the conference was a ribbon bow.



Obedience — simple obedience.

In I Samuel 15:22 we read that "to obey is better than sacrifice." There are many verses in scripture that deal with the curses of disobedient women and also the blessings of obedient women. In Jeremiah 7:23-24, God said, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward" (KJV).

If we are to go forward, we must obey. It is by obedience that one learns to obey. There are many blessings in the scripture associated with and a direct result of obedience; among these are blessings of prosperity, long life, success, and safety. But we need to live in obedience, as it brings glory to God and is an evidence of our love for God.

In I John 5:3 we read, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (KJV). He became "obedient unto death." Obedience should be a privilege. It is not always easy to obey, but God gives the power and strength to follow any commandments He has made for us.

In order to obey Him, we must first know Him. How do we know Him? By reading His Word and accepting by faith the good news that He gave His only begotten Son,

Jesus Christ, to die on a cross as atonement for our sins so we may have eternal life.

Once we know Him, we should show our love for Him by obeying the commands He has given. The greatest among His many commands is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31, NIV). God must be the first love of our life, and we are to love one another as He has loved us.

Before Christ was taken into heaven, He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel. I believe this applies to us as Christian women today. We are the light of the world. We are to go and let our light shine for Him, whether it be in a foreign country or to a neighbor next door.

He commands that we are to be on guard and be alert because the day and the hour of His return are unknown. We are to keep watch and be ready (spiritually ready) when He returns. Are you ready, if He should return today? If you are not, I pray that you will receive Him today.

Joy springs from obedience. To be filled with joy and happiness, we must live a life of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and give Him all the glory.

A devotional reading in *The Daily Bread* described a businessman in
(continued on page 3)

Congratulations and God's Continued Blessings to the New Lebanon Societies

In May the New Lebanon ladies celebrated their 75th year of being a Women's Missionary Society! Carolyn Hepner submitted this report.

On a Sunday afternoon, January 28, 1923, Mary Wenger from the Brethren Church in Dayton came to help the ladies in the New Lebanon Brethren Church organize a Woman's Missionary Society. At the time, Mary Wenger was the national treasurer of the W.M.S.

On May 7, 1998, the Afternoon W.M.S. and the Evening W.M.S. of New Lebanon, their guests, and the men of the church joined together at the annual Mother/Daughter banquet to celebrate our 75th anniversary.

The fellowship hall in the church was decorated to commemorate the occasion. Gold and silver balloons secured by gold-covered blocks floated above the tables. Touches of gold were used throughout the decorations. Youth in the church prepared favors utilizing gold- and silver-covered chocolate kisses. The original charter, written and signed by 28 ladies in 1923, was framed in gold and received a place of honor among the decorations.

The men of the church prepared and served the meal for the ladies. The chef was a true gourmet, complete with chef's coat and hat! The assistants and servers wore matching work aprons monogrammed with The Brethren Church. They all were as efficient as they were impressive.

Group singing included "Happy is the Woman," the theme song at the 1971 W.M.S. Conference held in Ashland.

The ladies were entertained with a Celebration in Style, which was a style show utilizing men in the church as models. The script was originated and narrated by the Evening W.M.S. And it is safe to say that everyone present contributed their share of laughter and hilarity to the event!

To continue the theme of our 75th

year, flowers were presented in special recognition of events experienced by individuals reflecting "75."

Each lady received a souvenir booklet which, along with the program, included a brief history of our W.M.S. groups, notes taken from early minutes of W.M.S. meetings, recognition of past and present officers, a memorial page dedicated to recently deceased members, and a number of vignettes submitted by the ladies in tribute to their mothers.

Many people contributed to make this 75th anniversary celebration special. And, because of their participation, 127 people have some very special memories of a truly gala event.

Carolyn included this additional note: The past two years the W.M.S. has honored the Woman of the Year during our church services on Mother's Day. This year Helen Bowser was our honoree. She has been active in W.M.S. for over 50 years, holding offices, including president, for many of those years. She regularly attended General Conference and served as a delegate from our church. Helen served as church treasurer for 17 years, served on the Library Committee, and actively promoted the Scholarship Fund created to provide some encouragement and assistance for our young people going to college.

Helen has been a Deaconess since 1966. She probably has served on most of the ministries/committees within the church and is always ready to assist with special projects in any way she can.

A retired school teacher, Helen continues to have much to contribute to our W.M.S. as well as to the church.

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

November 22-29, 1998



Missionary Miscellany

Vincent Edwin, the son-in-law of Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar, is attending Ashland Theological Seminary. His wife and daughter, Shanti and Shirleena, are expected to join him this fall. Pray for them because it is difficult to get a passport for Shirleena. (Remember that Shirleena is named for our Shirley Black, but that isn't the problem!) Shanti was born in Ashland, but the government has red tape for children brought into the U.S.

José Rivero, national supervisor of The Brethren Church in Argentina, requested flood relief from World Relief. To this date they have received \$15,000 and anticipate receiving \$30,000 in October. A recent e-mail from José reported that initially 200 families were helped.

Two church plants were birthed this fall. The Grace Community Church in Winchester, VA, with Mike and Barbara Woods as the pastoral family, began September 27. October 4 was the birthing Sunday for the Rock Springs Community Church in Vista, CA. Jim Boyd is the pastor. Jim and his wife, Stephanie, are expecting a son, whose name will be Grant. Continue your prayers for the new birth churches as well as the soon-to-be-born son.

Additional churches are in the planting stage and will be birthed in 1999.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Subscription price, \$7.50 per year in advance.

Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

Women's Outlook Newsletter

See this



Financial Secretary, Joanne Kroft, reported these totals for our conference offerings:

Thank offering (designated for benevolences): \$9,220.55.

Project offering (designated for the South American Theological Seminary, SATS): \$11,501.54.

Auction (designated for scholarships at SATS): \$806.50.

Ladies, your outreach is far! Thanks for your gifts which are another indication of Women Meant to Serve. Let us pray that those whom you have helped will use their gifts to help others.

Please remember to send all your W.M.S. offerings to Joanne Kroft—not to the Missionary Board, Ashland University, Riverside, or the Seminary. In order for an accurate accounting, the gifts must go through the Financial Secretary's books. Your gifts will soon reach their destination; don't worry that we keep your money.

Joanne also reported that Johnstown III was the first society to return its completed and corrected computer list of members with dues! Congratulations and thanks!

Nancy Hunn, editor of the *Devotional Guide*, has requested information for next year's book. All the recipes, poems, and brief inspirational messages come from somewhere, so when you taste or read something you like, please send a copy to Nancy. She will welcome fresh meeting ideas and suggestions for next year's writers, too.

The January–February issue of the *Newsletter* will be the Directory issue. Please make sure that Nancy has the name, address, and phone number of your society's officers.

Nancy's address is:

555 W. Market Street
Nappanee, IN 46550



VISUALIZE RENEWAL

Thought for the week and the year

General Conference

1998 – 1999

Obedience (*continued*)

Texas who often placed a Bible verse or a thought-provoking saying on a sign outside his building. One message contained just two words: "Yes, Lord."

I cannot think of a single situation in which those words would not work! The resolution of every trouble we face today begins with this trusting response to our Savior: "Yes, Lord, I will be content; Yes, Lord, I will trust You; Yes, Lord, I will go."

"You can never go wrong when you choose to obey Christ."

Thanks!

Dear Ladies of W.M.S.,

Thank you for the lovely picture that you gave me as I stepped down from the treasurer's duties. It is beautiful and it will match my decor well. I especially like the motto, "Hands to Work, Hearts to God," which sums up the ministry of W.M.S.

I have enjoyed my years as treasurer. Thank you for the gift to remind me of them.

Affectionately,
JoAnn Seaman

WORLD RELIEF AND SEWING UPDATE

Wow, ladies! What a terrific quilt auction we had at Conference! We raised over \$800 for scholarships for the Seminary in Argentina.

A special thanks to all those who helped with the quilting. At first it didn't look as if the quilting would get done, but with a lot of ladies working diligently a lot of hours, you made it! Thanks so much. I really appreciate all of you.

But now, once again, I need your help, as I have used up nearly all the quilt squares you have sent. The guidelines are in the back of the new *Service Guide*, which was distributed at Conference, but here they are again:

- * Use all cotton fabric
- * The **finished** size of the square should be 8½". Please start with a square larger than 8½" so it isn't too small after doing the needlework. The design should be smaller than 8".
- * Use some form of needlework to make your design, cross-stitch, embroidery, or applique, for example. Don't use fabric paints and similar methods. The needlework adds to the beauty of the finished project.
- * Send to

Joan Merrill
9300 S SR 3
Muncie IN 47302

Quilt squares may be sent at any time. They are used to make various items as well as the quilts that are auctioned off about every two years at General Conference. The proceeds are used for various mission projects, depending on the needs at the time of the auction.

In the *Service Guide*, you will note that Riverside Christian School collects Campbell labels, UPCs from Kodak and Hershey products, and points from Betty Crocker products. The school staff sends these items in and gets good quality teaching aids, etc., for the school.

Thanks for all of your help.

God bless you,

Joan Merrill

Joan's e-mail address is:
joanmerrill@juno.com

President's Pen (continued)

time, he emphasized, to focus on their blessings.

This man pointed out that they had streams full of fish, a forest that provided plenty of game, and their harvests were becoming more abundant. He recommended not a day of fasting, but a day of thanksgiving! I trust you will remember your blessings on Thanksgiving Day as you dig into your turkey dinner.

Christmas is another holiday when we also need to remember our blessings. We should dwell more on the birth of Christ rather than all of the gifts that will be given and received.

When our children were small, we always read the story of the birth of Christ from the Bible and talked about that before they were allowed to open any gifts. I think my children still carry on that tradition with their children. This is a good thing to start with your family, if

you do not already do something similar.

I read a story of a little girl from one of the poor districts of a large city. She became ill on Christmas Day and was taken to the hospital. As she lay in her bed, she heard carolers singing. She listened intently as someone told how Christ has come to redeem a lost world. With childlike faith, she received the gift of salvation by trusting Jesus.

Later she said to a nurse, "I'm having a good time here. I know I'll have to go home as soon as I am well, but I'll take Jesus with me. Isn't that wonderful why He was born? He came to save us."

"Yes," said the nurse wearily, "that's an old story."

"Oh, do you know about Him, too? You didn't look like you did," the child commented.

"How did I look?"

"Oh, like a lot of folks—sort of glum," replied the little girl.

Do we appear like that to others? They will never know we are Christians, if we look and act like that. Show all whom you meet that you love the Lord. As you do your shopping, smile at those who care for your purchases. People ask me how I can smile when things are so frantic at Christmas time. This is an opportunity to tell them Christ gives me the smile! The clerks are very busy at holiday time, and I am sure they have their share of cranky customers. You be the smiling one.

Psalm 100 is a favorite of mine and tells us that we are his "sheep" and we need to worship Him with joy and gladness. Let's do that.

I'll write again in a few months. Have a great Thanksgiving and a joyous Christmas.

God Bless You,


Shirley Black

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

I have recently re-found Hebrews 10:24-25, which says, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (NIV).

These verses could be a three- or four-point sermon for some, but I will emphasize two points: meet together and encourage one another. When you study God's Word together in your monthly devotional meetings, you feel love and warmth and gain strength. This is for you. Then you share the love, warmth, and strength with another—that is outreach. Briefly, it is encouragement. Frequently we can't guess when someone hurts, but a smile, a brief comment, and a hug may bring healing from hurt.

These verses are a wonderful complement to one of our reading books, *BALCONY PEOPLE* by Joyce Landorf Heatherley. She writes about the gift of affirmation, and describes

her book as "the lethal poison of rejection and the healing antidote of affirmation," (p. 9). This is a one-evening book, beautifully written and full of love and suggestions, whether we are evaluators (she suggests that we change) or affirmers (more are needed). I heartily recommend that we all read and practice being a balcony person.

In contrast is *LEFT BEHIND* by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. This is an exciting story about those who experienced the last days. The story resembles the Bible, but it is not the Bible. This book is fiction.

We encourage Christian reading. Exception: Please do not read the devotional articles at your meetings! When you are the leader, "talk" it to your friends. The articles are interesting, but even more so when you talk. The article can be the springboard for your additional thoughts and personal application.

With Carolyn Hepner's report from New Lebanon, Pauline Winfield sent the program brochure and a beautiful Bible bookmark commemorating their celebration. Let this account spur your thoughts into action. How long has your society been in service? Do you have members who have served for many years? Will you send a note about them, please?

They are mentors as well as our sisters in Christ. We want to acknowledge them and appreciate them.

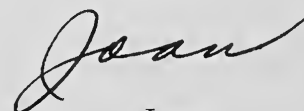
The Executive Board met September 26 to evaluate the recent conference and to plan for next summer's conference. Generally, the recent conference was outstanding. The committee ladies were commended for their work and some have volunteered to serve again next summer! We are glad for their willingness.

Nancy Hunn reported that 19 societies increased in membership last year. Those showing the largest increase (from 6 to 3) are: Gretna Lamplighters, Hagerstown, Tucson Evening, Oakville, Mulvane, and Falls City. Seven others increased by two and six by one. Our net gain was 16. W.M.S. is not a dying organization!

We realize there are problems with the computer mailing list. These problems are not human, but glitches in the system, which are being solved.

Remember to make the holidays holy!

Your friend,


Joan

Women's Outlook Newsletter

cal treatment in Rajahmundry and the outlying villages, and emergency and disaster relief supplies. Recently, The Brethren Church in Argentina also received a grant from World Relief to help people whose lives were affected by severe flooding this past spring. Many people receive Christ as a result of the ministry of both Brethren and non-Brethren Christians in the United States, India, Argentina, and other countries around the world.

A Day of Hope

What is a *Day of Hope*? It is the culmination of praying, devotions, learning, saving spare change in special boxes and giving ourselves and our resources for one month to help



Last year, 172,679 mothers and children benefited from World Relief's child survival programs in Bangladesh, Honduras, Mozambique, and Nicaragua. Mothers learned how to protect their children from death and disease through immunizations, good nutrition, and low-cost solutions to potentially fatal childhood illnesses. Through our partnership with World Relief, we in The Brethren Church had a part in this work.

World Relief help churches bring immediate and eternal hope to suffering people. November is World

Relief month. Your church should have received a packet of materials to help you understand the ministry of World Relief. Ask to see the video presentations. Follow the eight-day devotional guide. Use the special boxes to save spare change, which can provide significant help. Read the bulletin inserts. Pray fervently and give generously. "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God . . . Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:12-15, NIV). [†]

As Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, Rev. Smith oversees the World Relief program of the denomination.

Highlights of World Relief work last year

- ♦ 34,642 parents received LifeLoans in Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mozambique, Cambodia, Honduras, and Peru, which enabled them to start their own small businesses and better feed, clothe, and educate their children.
- ♦ Through partnerships with local churches, disaster assistance was provided to victims in Mexico, India, North Korea, Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Bosnia, and the United States.
- ♦ 28,125 farmers learned how to increase their crop yields and better feed their families, while protecting the quickly disappearing rain forest; 15,099 acres were reclaimed for future harvests by enriching the soil.
- ♦ In the United States, World Relief and its partnering churches welcomed 9,300 refugees who had been forced to flee their homes; 12,000 people found employment and 2,500 participated in English language classes.
- ♦ 41 homeless American families were linked to local churches and found permanent housing and an extended family of believers.

By our contributions to World Relief, we in The Brethren Church were part of all that was accomplished by World Relief during the past year. In recognition of our partnership in this work of helping the poor in the name of Christ, World Relief presented The Brethren Church the Open Hands Award in March at the 1998 convention of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"By working together, we *can* make a difference and change this world for Jesus Christ," declares Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief.

The Crisis in Sudan

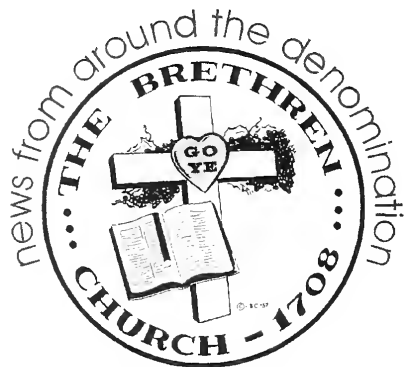
The focal point of relief efforts by World Relief at the present time is the African country of Sudan, where more than a million people are in danger of starvation. Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, traveled to Sudan in late October with Dr. Clive Calver, President of World Relief, to witness first hand the enormity of the crisis. Rev. Smith will report on the situation in Sudan in a special issue of *Insight into Brethren Missions*, to be published soon.

World Relief receives "vote of confidence" from Miami-Dade County, Florida

Alex Penelas, mayor of Miami-Dade County, Florida, announced September 29 that World Relief would be one of the main agencies the county would use to send collected relief goods to hurricane victims in the Caribbean.

Mayor Penelas said the county selected World Relief because of "its reputation for work done with Cuban rafters and for World Relief's management of programs at Guantanamo Bay." The mayor was referring to the Refugee Transit Home initiated by World Relief in 1992, which fed, clothed, and provided overnight lodging for more than 12,000 Cuban rafters, and to the lead role World Relief played at Guantanamo Bay in helping the 54,418 Cuban and Haitian asylum seekers who fled their countries by boat and raft in 1994.

"Since World Relief works in, for, and through the local evangelical church, we feel this is a great vote of confidence from Miami-Dade County, and we must not fail to respond to this," said Tom Willey, World Relief's South Florida Area Director.



Roger Charman of "Focus" to speak at pastors retreat

Bradenton, Fla. — Roger Charman, manager of Pastoral Ministries for Focus on the Family, will be the primary resource speaker for the 1999 retreat for Brethren pastors and their spouses.

The retreat, to be held March 2-4, 1999, at the Christian Retreat Center, Bradenton, Fla., will be hosted by pastors of the Florida District.

The retreat will include a time of challenge by the speaker, exchange of ideas, personal evaluation, and spiritual renewal. Also planned are opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and friendship.

Retreat costs (two nights lodging, six meals, and the program) are: one person—\$125 for shared room; \$175 for private room; couple—\$225 (\$250 for room with kitchenette); children—\$40 per child plus \$35 for child care (for children potty trained through grade 5). Registration forms were included in the October 2 issue of *Leadership Letter*. The registration deadline is January 10.

Churches are encouraged to pay for their pastors and pastors' wives to attend the retreat, to cover the cost of travel, and to provide pastors time off to attend. By doing so churches are contributing to the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of their pastors.

For more information about the retreat, contact Rev. Phil Lersch by phone at 727-544-2911 or by e-mail at PnJLersch@juno.com.

Note: Pastors retreat is between the National Association of Evangelicals Convention (2/28 to 3/2 in Orlando) and the Florida District Conference (3/7), for those interested in attending one or both of these events.

Skeldons honored for 25 years pastoral service to Oak Hill First Brethren Church

Oak Hill, W. Va. — Rev. Bill Skeldon and his wife Gene were honored September 6 by the First Brethren Church of Oak Hill for their 25 years of pastoral service to the congregation.

In honor of the occasion, Rev. Skeldon was given the day off. Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, was guest speaker for the morning worship service.

During the service the Skeldons were given corsages by Deaconess Lois Robinson. Deacon Paul Fox also pre-

sented the pastoral couple a plaque from the congregation on which were a clock, a cross, and an inscription recognizing the Skeldons for their 25 years of service to the congregation.

Following Rev. Smith's message, Kenneth Nuckels, Sunday school superintendent, asked everyone present who had been touched in some way by Pastor Skeldon's ministry—baptism, child dedication, marriage, or a soul-stirring sermon—to please stand. Few people remained seated.

During his 25 years at Oak Hill, Pastor Skeldon has baptized 177 people and received 218 persons into the church. He has also performed 77 weddings, dedicated 76 children, and conducted 146 funerals. During 23 of these 25 years he has also served as pastor of the nearby Gatewood Brethren Church.

The Skeldons also regularly and faithfully visit homes, hospitals, and nursing homes. In addition, Mrs. Skeldon teaches the nursery class in

Sunday school, and she is always available to lend a helping hand.

The Skeldons' three sons and their families were present for the celebration. A carry-in dinner fol-



Rev. Bill and Gene Skeldon (seated) with their sons John, Matthew, and Mark (l. to r.), their daughters-in-law Jane (l.) and Melanie (beside their husbands), and holding their granddaughters Suzanne (l.) and Katherine.

Photo by Pat LaRocco

lowed the worship service. At the dinner, the Skeldons cut a beautiful cake baked and appropriately decorated for the occasion by Margaret Watkins.

— reported by R. Rogusky

Gene Skeldon, the Runner

In addition to assisting her pastor-husband, teaching Sunday school, and working for Fayette County Child Development, Gene Skeldon (68) is a distance runner. In fact, she is a very good distance runner.

She recently won the first-place trophy in her age bracket in the Charleston, W. Va., distance run (15 miles), held September 5. She has run in various races, including the U.S. Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C., and has won several other trophies.

She began distance running when she was 53, at the suggestion of her husband, who is also a runner. She loves it and hopes to continue running. She says it keeps her healthy and also helps her keep pace with the children in her nursery class. [†]



AU and ATS News

Mortgages burned

Mortgages on two buildings were burned during the Ashland University President's Dinner, held October 1. University officials burned the mortgage to the Hawkins-Conard Student Center and a symbolic mortgage for the Gerber Academic Center at Ashland Theological Seminary. Ashland University borrowed \$6.03 million to finance the Student Center, which was dedicated October 1996. The mortgage was paid off three years early, saving the university approximately \$350,000 in interest. The Gerber Academic Center at the seminary was dedicated in May 1997. Total cost of this building was approximately \$1,350,000.

Professor honored

Dr. Jerry R. Flora, Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation at Ashland Theological Seminary, was recognized for his 25 years of teaching at Ashland Theological Seminary during the Ashland University and Seminary academic gathering this fall. Dr. Flora served the Fair Haven, Ohio, New Paris, Ind., and Washington, D.C., Brethren churches as pastor before joining the seminary faculty. [✚]

John Swope ordained to Brethren eldership July 19 at the Waterbrook Brethren Church

Edinburg, Va. — John David Swope was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Catherine was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held Sunday, July 19, at the Waterbrook Brethren Church, where Rev. Swope serves as pastor.

Dr. Dale Stoffer, Associate Professor of Historical Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary, gave the message for the service. Brethren elders Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, and Dr. Brian Moore, pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church, also participated in the service.

Freddie Helsley, associate pastor of the congregation, read the action of the Waterbrook Church calling for the ordination of Pastor Swope. He also presented Pastor Swope a Communion set on behalf of the church. Chip Crawford presented special music for the service.

Born March 13, 1962, John grew up in Bowling Green, Ohio, the youngest of six children. He attended Bowling Green High School, graduating in 1980. While in high

school, he met Catherine Forse, and they were married in 1982.

He attended Bowling Green State University, receiving a B.S. degree in Industrial Education in 1985. Later that year, he and Catherine moved to Florida, where John taught middle school and Catherine attended Florida International University, from which she later received a B.A. degree. It was also in Florida that their first two children were born, Zachariah in 1988 and Savannah in 1990.

By August of 1990, John had completed a Master of Science degree in educational leadership at Florida International University. He had also received confirmation that God was calling him to enter seminary. So in 1993 the family moved to Ashland, Ohio, where John and Catherine ministered to youth at Trinity Lutheran Church while John attended Ashland Theological seminary. During their years in Ashland, their second set of children was born, Jeremiah in 1994 and Autumn in 1995. John received his Master of Divinity degree from the seminary in May 1996.

John came to The Brethren Church by way of years of service and learning in several denominations. As a child he attended a Methodist congregation, but he became a Christian at age 13 in an independent Congregational church. As an adult he did volunteer ministry in Presbyterian and Christian churches before entering ministry full time at Trinity Lutheran in Ashland. He was called to The Brethren Church through his experiences at Ashland Theological Seminary and began pastoring the Waterbrook Brethren Church in January 1997. [✚]



Rev. John and Catherine Swope with children (l. to r.) Autumn, Zachariah (back), Jeremiah, and Savannah.

visit, and do related tasks. She came on staff September 6.

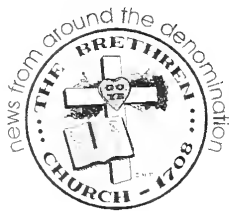
A "daughter" of the Gretna congregation, Ms. Weiskittle was graduated this past spring from Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) with a major in social work. According to Pastor Lynn Mercer, the Gretna Church has been impressed with her high level of spiritual and personal maturity and the enthusiastic way she accepts whatever ministry is asked of her. "We are so pleased that the Lord has called her to serve among us," he added. [✚]

Gretna calls Julie Weiskittle

Bellefontaine, Ohio — Julie Weiskittle, pastoral intern at Gretna Brethren Church this past summer, has been called by the church to serve on the pastoral staff.



She will serve as personnel director and small group coordinator, work with the youth, preach occasionally,



Mosers installed at Stockton

Stockton, Calif. — Rev. Gregg and Diane Moser were installed August 16 as pastor and pastor's wife of the Stockton Brethren Church.

Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church,



Rev. Gregg and Diane Moser

presented a message and gave the charge to Pastor Moser and the congregation.

Special music was presented by the Fil-Maps Chorale of Stockton and by the chorale's director and soloist, Enrico Saboren. A lunch followed the service.

For Pastor Moser, the Stockton pastorate is a return to the Brethren denomination. He served as assistant pastor of the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland and then as pastor of the Derby, Kansas, Brethren Church before becoming pastor of a multi-cultural Church of the Brethren congregation in McFarland, Calif. His service in that church was good preparation for becoming pastor of the Stockton Church, which also has people from many cultural backgrounds.

The Fil-Maps Chorale, which sang for the service, is composed of Filipino doctors, dentists, nurses, and other professional people who promote the culture and heritage of the Philippines. The chorale practices in the Stockton Church building and considers the pastor of the church to be its chaplain.

The Mosers have three children, including a daughter, Ingrid, who is a missionary in Bathurst, Australia. [✚]

Ordination service for Chris Moellering held July 12 at Huntington First Brethren Church

Huntington, Ind. — Christopher Paul Moellering was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and

his wife Leslie was consecrated as the wife of an elder on Sunday, July 12, during the morning worship service of the Huntington First Brethren Church, where Rev. Moellering serves as pastor.

Dr. Lee Solomon, Dean of Institutional Development at Ashland Theological Seminary, gave a message during the service from Hebrews 12:1-3 entitled "Run, Christian, Run." Dr. Solomon and Rev. Ken Hunn, pastor of the Nappanee First Brethren Church, performed the ordination procedures, assisted by retired pastor Rev. Herb Gilmer.

Chris was born (Feb. 21, 1971) and raised in Elkhart, Indiana, where he began attending the Winding Waters Brethren Church in 1986. He accepted Christ as Lord and Savior on April 27, 1987, as a result of the ministry of Doug Faulkner, who was then youth pastor at Winding Waters. Following Chris's conversion, his parents also

began attending Winding Waters, and all three were baptized together on March 6, 1988, by Dr. Lee Solomon, who was then the pastor.

Soon after accepting Christ as Savior, Chris began to sense a call to Christian ministry. This call led him to consider many options over the next several years, including missionary service and youth ministry.

In the fall of 1989, he entered

Greenville College in Greenville, Ill., as a youth ministries major. At Greenville he met Leslie Brown of New Castle, Ind., who later became his wife. In 1991 they both transferred to Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., Leslie in January and Christ in September. They were also married that year, on August 3, 1991. Two years later Chris graduated *cum laude* from Ball State with a B.S. degree in philosophy, and Leslie graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.S. degree in accounting.

In the fall of 1993, Chris entered Ashland Theological Seminary. While in seminary he served the Louisville Brethren Bible Church as part-time pastor for about nine months. On May 1, 1996, he began serving the Huntington First Brethren Church as pastor, and later that month he received a Master of Divinity degree from the seminary.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Chris serves on the Indiana District Christian Education Board and is secretary for the Huntington Ministerial Association. In his free time, he enjoys camping with his family and bird watching.

Chris and Leslie have three daughters—Katie (5), Abbie (3), and Michelle (born this September).

The ordination service was followed by a carry-in dinner and an open house at the parsonage. [✚]



Rev. Chris and Leslie Moellering

Sarver church building gets new roof

Sarver, Pa. — Members of the Sarver Brethren Church, with help from some Pleasant View Brethren Church members, replaced the roof on the Sarver Church building on September 19.

By the grace of God, they were able to complete the roof and get everything cleaned up just 45 minutes before a severe thunderstorm moved in. "We praise the Lord for His goodness and for all who helped with this project," said church secretary Judy Mittica. "Special thanks, also to all the ladies who prepared meals and to those who donated food," she added. [✚]



Kris Mellinger serving as unit leader for Service Adventure

Ft. Wayne, Ind. — Kristopher Mellinger, a member of Meadow Crest Brethren Church in Ft. Wayne, is spending 10½ months (August 1998 to July 1999) serving in Philippi, W. Va., with Service Adventure.



Service Adventure provides post-high school young adults with a short-term adventure

in service, learning, and spiritual growth. Participants live in households with other young adults and serve as volunteers for community service organizations, working with children, senior citizens or people with disabilities, or providing repair or secretarial services.

Kris is serving as a unit leader with Service Adventure. As such, he is responsible for providing guidance to the household living and spiritual formation of the five members of his unit. He gives leadership to the members of his unit as they engage in group Bible study, explore social issues, seek personal growth, and test possible career options.

A 1996 graduate of Krisman Christian High School (home school), Kris worked as a cabinet maker for Furniture by Miller of Grabill, Ind., before entering Service Adventure. In the Meadow Crest Church he has been active as a youth leader.

He is the son of Herman and Carol Mellinger. Herman is moderator of the Meadow Crest Church, and Carol is the pastor's secretary and a Sunday school teacher.

Service Adventure is sponsored by the Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church and by the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. [✠]

The Brethren Church well-represented at the Second Brethren World Assembly

Bridgewater, Va. — Brethren from various denominations with common ties to the Brethren movement that began in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany, gathered July 15–18 at Bridgewater College for the Second Brethren

World Assembly. The theme of the event was *Faith and Family — Challenges and Commitments*.

The Brethren Church was well-represented at the gathering. Thirty-two of the 141 registered attendees were from our denomination. In addition, a dozen or so of our Brethren, most of them from the Bridgewater area, attended one or more sessions of the assembly but did not register.

Also attending the assembly were representatives from the Church of the Brethren (the largest group and the one with the most members present); the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches; the Old German Baptist Brethren; and the Dunkard Brethren. A new Brethren body also now exists, the Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International, a group of 40 to 50 congregations that recently separated from the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. A few members from this group were also present.

The Brethren Church was also well-represented among the participants on the assembly program. Dr. Dale Stoffer, Associate Professor of Historical Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS), served as program coordinator for the assembly. He also was the “convener” for one of the sessions.

ATS professors John Shultz and Brenda Colijn made two of the

major presentations. Dr. Shultz presented a paper on “Issues Facing the Family in Contemporary American Culture,” and Dr. Colijn gave a paper entitled “The Faith, the Family, and the Family of Faith.” Dr.



The Thursday evening worship service was held in the beautiful sanctuary of the new \$5-million facility of the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. The congregation moved into the building on June 7, and the Brethren World Assembly was the first group other than the congregation to worship in the new sanctuary.

Joseph R. Shultz, former president of Ashland University and ATS, also served as convener for a session.

Three Brethren Church members spoke at worship services. Dr. Rickey Bolden, pastor of Southeast Christian Fellowship in Washington, D.C., one of three speakers at the Thursday evening service, spoke on what the church can do for the inner city. Señor José Rivero, president of The Brethren Church in Argentina, one of the three speakers at the Friday evening service, spoke about problems among families in Argentina. And ATS professor Dr. Jerry Flora, the only speaker at the closing worship service, spoke about faith that listens and faithfulness that obeys, all in the context of family.

Carolyn Cooksey (Park Street Brethren Church, Ashland, Ohio) and Dr. James Hollinger (Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind.) were The Brethren Church representatives on discussion panels on the roles of women and men in families of the various Brethren groups.

And Dr. Warren Garner (First Brethren Church, Ashland, Ohio) was also a

(continued on next page)



Dr. Harold Barnett retires from pastoral ministry

Mathias, W. Va. — Brethren elder Dr. Harold E. Barnett, 67, retired October 31, 1998, from full-time pastoral ministry. He and his wife Doris have returned to Lost Creek, Ky., their home for many years, to care for his parents.

During his 45 years of Christian ministry, Dr. Barnett served Brethren churches of our denomination in Mansfield, Ohio; Johnstown, Pa. (Third Brethren); Lost Creek, Rowdy, and Haddix, Ky., and Hagerstown, Md. He also pastored two Church of the Brethren congregations, most recently the Mathias, W. Va., Church of the Brethren, where he served from 1991 until his retirement.

In addition, he was president of Riverside Christian Training School, Lost Creek, Ky. (of which he was a 1949 graduate), from 1959 to 1975. He led in the revitalization of the school, which was on the brink of closing when he became president. Then in 1976 he helped start Antitam Bible College near Hagerstown, Md., where he served as dean and professor from 1976–1983.

Harold and Doris (King) were married in 1953. Doris was from the County Line Brethren Church of Lakeville, Indiana. They are the parents of seven children.

Though retiring from pastoral service, Dr. Barnett says that he and his wife will never retire from "Christian ministry." [✝]

Center Chapel Brethren Church celebrates centennial anniversary on September 27th

Peru, Ind. — The Center Chapel First Brethren Church northeast of Peru, Ind., celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sunday, September 27, with a special morning worship service and an afternoon Centennial Homecoming program.

Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, spoke during the morning service, bringing a message on "The Church at the Crossroads." Rev. Bob Dixon, pastor of the congregation, was worship leader for the service.

Also participating in the service were Edna Speicher, who told the children's story; Dr. Arden Gilmer, pastor of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, who gave the



Center Chapel Pastor Bob Dixon presents a plaque to former pastor Rev. Herbert Gilmer and his wife Evelyn in recognition of their service to the congregation.

morning prayer; and Rev. Gene Eckerley, Indiana District Elder, who brought greetings. Special music was presented by the Gospel Heirs.

A ceremony honoring Rev. L.W. Ditch (deceased), founding pastor of the congregation, was held during the afternoon Centennial Homecoming Program. Rev. Ditch, who was state evangelist at the time, labored with a group of members from the Roann, Ind., Brethren Church in founding the new congregation. A plaque in honor of Rev. Ditch was presented to his great-granddaughter, Jennifer Keyes, a member of the Mexico, Ind., Brethren Church.

Also honored during the service were Rev. Herbert Gilmer, who pastored the church from 1986 to 1991, and his wife Evelyn. They, too, were given a plaque in recognition of their service to the congregation.

Dennis Betzner led the Centennial Program, and Nancy Bender presented a history of the Center Chapel Church. District Elder Gene Eckerley, who grew up in the Center Chapel Church, spoke during the program. The Kings Four presented special music, and Debbie Fouts played the prelude. [✝]

Thank You!

Dear Brethren,

In 1951, during National Conference, Bonnie [Munson] contracted polio and was hospitalized in Johnstown, Pa. During that week, Betty Rowsey, a telephone operator, kept in touch with us and reported Bonnie's progress to Conference attendees.

You supported us all in so many ways through several hospitalizations.

Now you are still supporting Bonnie with your financial assistance for a wheelchair to accommodate her growing needs.

She has been sitting straight up 16 hours a day for 47 years. With her new chair, which is still being adapted to meet her needs, she will be able to lean back, adjust her sitting position up and down, and elevate her feet.

You just never quit.

In this wonderful Thanksgiving season, THANK YOU!

A grateful father,
Charles Munson

(continued from page 13)

ren Church, North Manchester, Ind.) led a workshop on the Brethren Way of Christ.

Although called a *World Assembly*, this second gathering, unlike the first, had few people in attendance from Brethren groups outside the U.S. Only Sr. José Rivero from The Brethren Church in Argentina and Rev. Dan Kim, former Church of the Brethren missionary to

South Korea, represented non-U.S. Brethren groups. It was suggested that an assembly be held in the year 2008 (the tri-centennial of the Brethren) in Schwarzenau, Germany, and that efforts be made to make it truly a *World Assembly* of Brethren.

The Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., and Bridgewater College cosponsored this year's gathering. [✝]



Vacation Bible Schools

Two Pennsylvania churches reported successful vacation Bible schools, held this past summer.

Missions around the world was the focus of VBS at the **Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church**. A video of Brethren mission work in Mexico City showed various church activities as well as the terrible poverty of some of the people our missionaries work with there. An audio cassette by Brethren missionary Tracy Ruggles gave the children a message and a Spanish song for each day. Pennsylvania District Crusaders Melanie Johns and Tiffany Neiderhiser helped with the VBS.

"Hooked on Jesus" was the theme of VBS at the **Berlin Brethren Church**. Classes were held for all ages from four years old through adults. Average attendance was 105. Classes for adults included an account by a local doctor of his medical mission trip to Haiti, a session on cults, a discussion of the second coming of Jesus, and two classes on Brethren history that included a field trip to significant Brethren sites in the area. A fishing boat at the front of the church was filled with food items for the local food pantry, and a coin toss game and a Friday night offering brought in more than \$200 for victims of a tornado in the town of Salisbury, about 20 miles south of Berlin. [J]

The National Brethren Youth in Christ Statistical Report for 1997-1998

Ashland, Ohio — Each year as the National Brethren Youth in Christ (BYIC) Convention draws near, an assessment is made of the state of BYIC in The Brethren Church. Then during the Convention, recognition is given to local BYIC groups that have excelled in some area during the previous year.

Below is statistical information that was put together for this year's BYIC Convention. The total number of registered BYIC members for 1997-1998 was 1,018.

These statistics are printed here not only to inform, but also to challenge youth to greater effort in the year ahead and to encourage adults to be supportive of the youth.

Top Ten Registered Youth Groups by Membership

1. St. James	70
2. Jefferson	54
tie Nappanee	54
4. North Manchester	53
5. Milledgeville	47
6. North Georgetown	42
7. Northgate	32
tie Smoky Row	32
9. Bryan	31
tie Milford	31

BYIC groups that participated in the 1997-1998 goals program

Tucson 1st	Northgate
Jefferson	Canton Trinity
Bloomington	Nappanee
Oak Hill	Cheyenne
Roann	Park Street
St. James	

Top Ten BYIC Groups in Ingathering Giving

1. Elkhart 1st	\$467.48
2. St. James	430.00
3. Jefferson	400.00
tie Nappanee	400.00
tie Tucson 1st	400.00
6. Roann	250.00
7. Lanark	240.00
8. Gateway	210.00
9. Hagerstown	200.00
10. Northgate	195.00

(Total ingathering from all BYIC groups was \$5,319.23)

Percentage of churches in each district that have registered youth groups

Central	100%
Southwest	100%
Indiana	65%
Midwest	60%
Ohio	45%
Southeastern	41%
Florida	40%
Pennsylvania	38%
N. California	33%

(Total # of registered groups: 61)

Where are the 1,018 Registered BYIC Members? (Percentage by District)

Indiana	41%
Ohio	16%
Southeastern	12%
Pennsylvania	11%
Central	8%
Southwest	4%
Midwest	3%
N. California	3%
Florida	1%
At-Large	1%

Gratis, Ohio — Members of the Women's Missionary Society of the Gratis First Brethren Church have been busy making baby quilts—but not for babies in their own families or church or for babies they will probably ever see.

The quilts are for an international program that seeks to help "at-risk" babies. The program's original intent was to help crack babies or babies born with AIDS.

But quilts are now given to all at-risk babies. Eileen Kiracofe and Donna Smith co-chair the quilt-making project. The group has made 34 quilts, which were taken to Dayton Children's Hospital.

— submitted by Melba Hanks

At right (l. to r.), Marquedlita Murphy, Ruth Focht, Lucille Brandenburg, Carolyn Boomershine, Eileen Kiracofe, and Lois Barnhart display quilts their group has made.



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A newsletter for Brethren people

December 1998

A Child is Born; a Son is Given

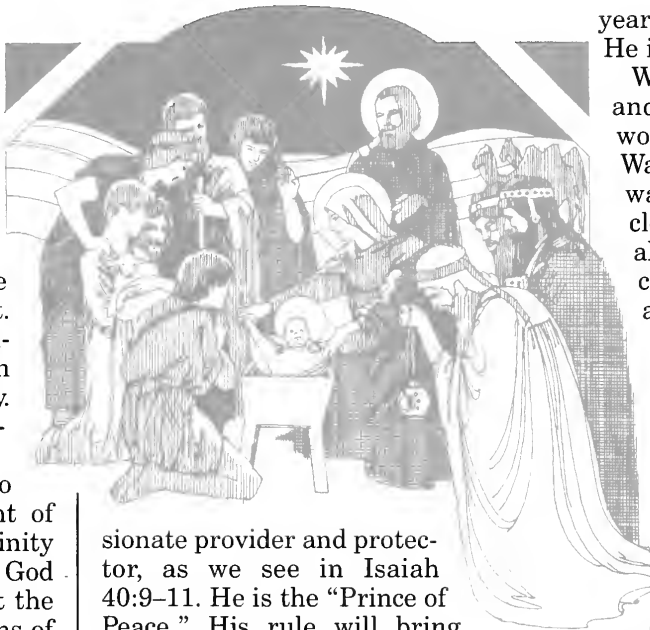
By Mrs. K. Nirmala Prasanth

"A CHILD IS BORN; A SON IS GIVEN." This prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 9 verse 6 expresses and explains the dual nature of the great savior Jesus Christ. Jesus the Christ is both the Son of Man and the Son of God.

"A child is born" expresses the human nature of Jesus Christ. "A son is given" explains the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Son of Man includes His humanity. His being the Son of God includes His divinity. Just as a single coin has two sides, so Jesus Christ is an embodiment of humanity on one side and divinity on the other side. The Son of God became the Son of Man so that the sons of man can become the sons of God. This is the whole truth embedded in the birth of Christ.

The Child born is the royal son of David's genealogy and is called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Counselor points to the Messiah as a king of action. As a "Wonderful Counselor," the coming Son of David will carry out a royal program that will cause the whole world to marvel. He will be "Mighty God," and "a remnant of Jacob will return" to Him (Isa. 10:21).

Another name given to the Son of God Jesus is "Everlasting Father." He will be an everlasting, compas-



sionate provider and protector, as we see in Isaiah 40:9-11. He is the "Prince of Peace." His rule will bring wholeness and well-being to the whole world, as we find in Isaiah 11:6-9. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah brings forth Jesus as a Child born and a Son given.

We find a great, startling contrast at the birth of the Savior. The Christ Child was born in the strange surroundings of dirt and dust. But the air above was filled with the hallelujahs of the Heavenly Host. His bed was a cattle pen, but a heavenly star drew the great wise men to pay Him the greatest homage. He was born from a virgin womb and was buried in a virgin tomb.

He owned no fields nor any fisheries, but He fed five thousand hungry mouths with bread and fish. He wrote no book, built no church. But the best Book in the world was written about Him. Even after 2,000

years, His Name is magnified and He is worshiped everywhere.

Was it merely the son of Mary and Joseph who crossed the world's horizon 2,000 years ago? Was it mere human blood that was spilled at Calvary and cleansed human sin? Faced with all these startling contrasts, we cannot resist saying, "My Lord and my God!"

The great significance of the birth of Jesus lies not in the simple faith of the shepherds who searched and found Jesus in the night; not in the singing of the Heavenly Host; but in the fact that when the wise men found the Baby Jesus, they fell on their knees and worshiped Him.

Can we worship the Child who was born and the Son who was given with the same sanctity and sacrifice? [✠]

Nirmala serves with her husband, Dr. Prasanth Kumar, in the Brethren Mission in India. She is the editor and publisher of Suvarthikudu (Evangelist), a Christian magazine in India. This article is from that publication and is reprinted here with her permission.



Nirmala Prasanth

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Giving Ourselves at Christmas

By Alice Chapin

ONE CHRISTMAS MORNING, I got up before my family. As I sipped coffee in a big rocker beside the tree, I suddenly felt alarmed at the mounds and mounds of lavishly wrapped packages. I wondered how many of the gifts would be wanted or used and how many were just plain junk. It seemed truly irreverent to spend so much money on ourselves to celebrate the birthday of another.

I knew that some of the children's most costly presents were war toys or unsuitable playthings. I also knew that giving the kids material gifts has little to do with love. The piles of packages left me with a sick, guilty feeling that cast a gloomy cloud over our holiday celebration. Since that time, I've encountered many people who have experienced this kind of Christmas overkill.

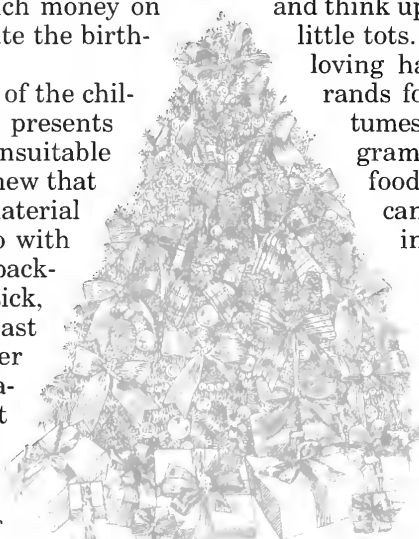
So how do we get out of Yuletide overindulgence? One way is to discuss with your family the idea of giving themselves the "gift of disadvantage" next year. Thus everyone will be able to pass on some of their blessings to others. To do this, gather your family and read Luke 4:18-19, Matthew 25:31-40, and 1 John 4:7-8. Then make a list of caring acts in which family members might become

involved as a birthday gift to Christ. Talk about who needs help most and how to get money for projects.

Most everyone will agree that while giving tangible things is important, getting personally involved in the lives of the needy has the highest priority. Children probably will accept the challenge eagerly and think up great ideas, even the little tots. For example, it takes loving hands to help run errands for a shut-in, sew costumes for the children's program at church, deliver food baskets, or collect canned goods and clothing for area food pantries.

After your family discussion, you may find that the kids had been waiting all along for Mom and Dad or other adults to suggest ways to make Christmas less self-centered. Most likely, you all will feel gratified to see Christmas going in a different direction. You may even come to realize the significance of James Russell Lowell's statement: "Not what we give, but what we share. For the gift without the giver is bare." [†]

Reprinted from A Simple Christmas by Alice Chapin, a book that gives hundreds of ideas for scaling down



What Gift Will You Give?

Rev. Ronald L. Waters, pastor of Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo, Iowa, told this story in his December 1996 church newsletter:

A three-year-old girl asked, "Mommy, what is Christmas?" Her mother carefully explained that Christmas is Jesus' birthday. The little girl then asked, "Then why don't we give Him birthday presents?" The mother explained the tradition of exchanging gifts as an expression of love for one another, and that seemed to end the matter.

On Christmas Eve, however, the little girl placed a package under the tree on her way to bed. She said it was a birthday gift for Jesus, which she was sure He would open during the night. When the little girl was asleep, her mother, not wanting her daughter to be disappointed, opened the crudely wrapped package and found the box empty.

On Christmas morning the little girl was thrilled to find that the package had been opened and that her gift was gone. "What was in it?" asked her mother.

"It was a box full of love," the little girl replied.

Pastor Waters then adds, "What present will you give to Jesus on His birthday? It may be a box full of love, but I hope that you also show your love for Him in some more tangible way. Do something for someone who will not be expecting it. Jesus said that when you do things for others you are doing it for Him." [†]

the holiday celebration and bringing Christ and joy back into Christmas. Published by Herald Press, (256 pp., \$14.99), Scottdale, Pa. Used by permission of the publisher.

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Pontius' Puddle



What's It All About?

By Dan Lawson

SEVERAL YEARS AGO around Christmas time my wife and I found ourselves deep in Christmas shopping, like thousands of other parents and grandparents. We were searching for just the right toy to give our beloved daughter—a toy that would adequately express to her marvelous little two-year-old mind just how much we loved her.

We were shopping in a toy store that specialized in Christmas hassle, when I received a call from nature. I left my wife knee deep in baby dolls and plastic tea sets to find the “necessary room.” On the way I passed a middle-aged man wearing a worn-out jacket with holes in the sleeves over a tattered flannel shirt and worn, faded blue jeans. He was staring at a display of video games that were locked out of reach in a glass case. I could tell from the look on his face that he didn't have a clue what he was looking at.

I went on about my business only to see that same man a few minutes later talking on a pay phone. He had a thick southern accent, and I couldn't help but overhear a small part of his con-

told the whole story. Here was a man who loved his son and dearly wanted to give the boy his greatest Christmas wish. It seemed apparent, however, that he would not be able to do so. I could tell by the tone of his voice, the look on his



face and the slump of his shoulders that there was no way he could afford the cost.

I could picture in my mind the excitement the boy would show at the thought of his super power-packed video game hiding somewhere among the packages under the Christmas tree. I could also feel in my heart the pain the father would feel knowing that it would not be there.

It's not fair!

“It's just not fair!” I told my wife as I related the story to her. “This man wants to give his son the greatest Christmas gift he can find, and these corporate giants have brainwashed his boy into thinking that he just has to have the most expensive toy on the market. Now that father has to choose between breaking his son's heart or breaking his bank account. Christmas shouldn't have to hurt like that!”

I fear this scenario is familiar to far too many parents every Christmas season. Our children watch television and see fantastic toys

advertised in such a way as to indelibly imprint on their little minds the idea that this toy will make their lives complete. They beg and plead with their parents to give them “the wonder toy” for Christmas. What's a parent to do?

Thinking back on the man in the toy store, I believe that he had already given his son the greatest gift he could give him. He loved the boy deeply, and he desperately wanted his son to know it. I think he had merely fallen into the commercial trap of Christmas. This is the trap that says, “The greater the love, the greater the gift.” In the context in which this message is given, however, it couldn't be a greater lie.

Commercialism has twisted this message to mean, “The greater the love, the *more expensive* the gift.” These two messages are not synonymous. The first may be true when given in the proper context, but the second is never true.

Greater love!

Jesus once said, *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command* (John 15:13–14, NIV). Here it would appear that the message “The greater the love, the greater the gift” is true. Jesus was so sincere about this message that He demonstrated it for each of us on the cross. He gave Himself as a gift so that we might have eternal life.

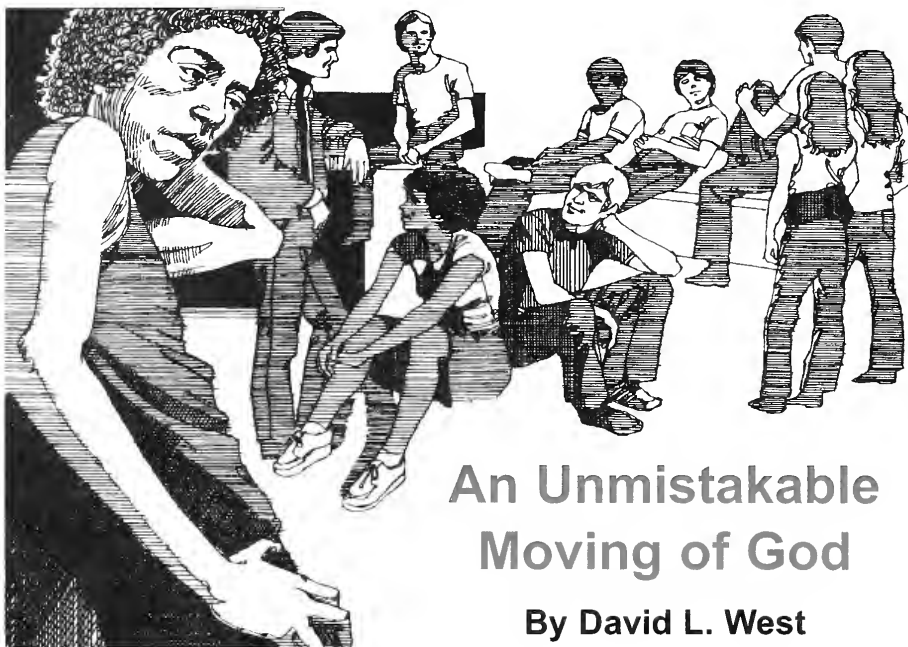
We all are guilty of getting caught up in the commercialism of Christmas to some degree. We call it “the spirit of giving.” The truth is, however, that giving is only secondary. Christmas isn't so much about what God gave the world as it is about how God loves the world. This Christmas, when you are trying to find just the right gift to express the greatness of your love, remember that the greatest gift of all *is love*. [†]

Dr. Lawson is senior pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church, Goshen, Ind. This is one in a series of articles in which he applies Bible truths to our personal lives.

“Here was a man who loved his son and dearly wanted to give the boy his greatest Christmas wish.”

versation. “Uh, Jay, this is yer dad. Uh, is yer mom there? She's not! Well, uh, what's that there Nintendo yer talkin' 'bout? [pause] It's uh WHUT?!”

As I went back to the plastic tea sets and the chatty baby dolls, I couldn't get this man off my mind. It wasn't so much what he said; it was the expression on his face that



An Unmistakable Moving of God

By David L. West

IF YOU WERE ASKED, "Where do you see the unmistakable moving of God in The Brethren Church?" what would you say? When I pondered that question, I was not sure how I would respond.

I do not mean to imply that good things are not happening in the denomination. Quite to the contrary. In the past few months we have witnessed the birth of three new Brethren congregations, and we await the birth of several more. There is also an awakening across the denomination in worship and spiritual formation. These are exciting and encouraging signs of the hand of God.

Things only God can do

But what I want to discover are the things that God is doing that seem impossible. I believe that our Heavenly Father longs to show us what He is capable of doing among us. Seeing that which *only God can do* is a faith-stretching experience.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10 that *we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do* (emphasis added). This suggests that we need to discover that which God has already prepared for us to do. What are we doing to discern the ministry seeds that God has already sown in the name of The Brethren Church? These are some of the questions that fill my night-time hours.

In October, over the course of a few days in Washington, D.C., I caught a glimpse of a vision that can only be of God. I would like to share with you my perspective on this vision.

I had been invited by Dr. Rickey Bolden to come and preach and share with our Brethren at Southeast Christian Fellowship. The occasion was the sixth anniversary of Dr. Bolden's call and ministry in this Washington church.

What an alive, exciting, and joyous occasion it was! Christ's name was exalted; the pastor and his family were honored; the Word was preached; and God made his habitation in a nondescript building on Q Street in Washington, D. C. It was a worship experience that both my wife and I found to be heavenly. I believe every Brethren person should have at least one Southeast Christian Fellowship experience.

A glimpse of God's vision

But as incredible as that experience was, it is not what I want to share. It was in what happened two days earlier that I witnessed the unmistakable moving of God and caught a glimpse of His vision.

On Friday morning, Pastor Rickey took me on a field trip of the area near the church. He told me that he was going to show me something special, as he shared with me the vision he felt God had given him for this city.

Not far from the church I became aware of the vast economic downturn in the neighborhood. As we drove through the area, I detected a sense of hopelessness on the faces of those who walked the streets. Nevertheless, I was amazed at how many people acknowledged my brother as we drove by—some with a simple nod of the head, others by calling out, "Hey Rev." It was obvious that this pastor has been visible in his community.

We headed to Anacostia High School, located in the heart of a run-down neighborhood. It is also the heart of a vision of ministry that could change a city. Our knock on the school door brought a security guard who opened the locked doors to the accompaniment of another chorus of "Hi Rev."

I was greeted with looks of suspicion, but those changed to looks of welcome as soon as Pastor Rickey came into view. As we passed through metal detectors in this educational facility, I was grimly reminded of the need for Jesus. Pastor Rickey showed me around the school. As he did so, he engaged in some impromptu guidance counseling with two young students who had not been to school yet this year.

A youth ministry

We left Anacostia and walked about a block and a half toward Krammer Junior High School. As we approached the school, Pastor Rickey pointed to a burned out, graffiti-tattooed building and said, "This is where God has called us to start a comprehensive youth ministry." The building had lots of glass, but none in the windows. Scars of past fires were hard to ignore. Satanic sayings and symbols adorned the walls.

As I looked at the building, at the junior high school, and at the high school in the distance, I thought, "Who would undertake something like this?" Then I saw the gleam in Pastor Rickey's eyes, eyes completely caught up in a God-sized vision. In that instant I experienced one of those Holy Spirit moments. Only God could pull off a transformation this big. We talked about the many obstacles, but Pastor Rickey faced

(continued on next page)

A world desperate for some Good News

By Robert Stafford

SOMETIMES I think we should cancel Sunday morning services and go fishing or play golf on Sunday morning. The world is desperate to hear the message of God's grace. Either we have forgotten that message or else we've never experienced His grace, because if we were sharing it with the lost, our churches would be full to overflowing.

I met a guy at the health club. He was loud and unruly, definitely not the kind of man I'd normally pick as a friend. He was also a recovering alcoholic. For some strange reason he latched onto me.

One day he asked if I would like to go fishing. I asked if my son could join us, because I don't have many opportunities to take him fishing. He said it would be okay, but it would be crowded in the small boat.

My friend met us and we started for the lake. On the way we stopped for breakfast, and my friend paid the bill. We needed bait, so we stopped at a tackle shop. I also needed a fishing license. My friend not only bought the bait, but he also told

them to put my fishing license on his bill. I protested that this was going too far, but to no avail.

When we got to the lake, we used his boat and his tackle. He even put bait on our hooks for us and then took off the fish that we caught.

Later, on the way back to his house, we stopped for lunch—if you can call large ice cream cones at Baskin Robbins lunch. Once again, he paid. When we got to his house, he told us to go to the back yard and enjoy his pool while he cleaned the fish. He soon came out and told us that his wife had come home and that she was filleting the fish. Then he swam with us for a little while in the pool.

A leading question

As we relaxed by the pool, he said, "Bobbie, I got a question for you. What the hell is grace? You know, when people say, 'By God's grace yada yada yada.'"

I said, "Bob [that's his name too], you've been doing it all day. *You* asked me to go fishing; I didn't ask you. *You* bought breakfast. *You*

bought the bait and my license. *You* provided the boat and tackle. *You* baited the hooks and took the fish off. *You* cleaned the fish, and now your wife is filleting them. *And I get to take the fish home to eat!* Grace is unmerited favor. You did all this because you wanted to do it for me."

I could see the excitement in Bob's eyes as he grasped, for the first time, what grace really is. A couple of weeks later, we talked again. For two weeks Bob, who leads some AA meetings in the area, had been explaining the meaning of grace at those meetings.

Now I understand that it might have been easy for Bob to do those things for me, because he thinks I'm a nice guy. But he didn't expect anything from me in return. Now imagine God doing something like that for you and me just because He wants to, because he loves us. He did just that. God knows we don't deserve heaven, but He would *love* to have us there. That's why Jesus came into the world. He came to take our punishment for all we've done wrong, so that we might have the opportunity to go to heaven.

Nobody is good enough to go to heaven. And **nobody** deserves to go there because of what they have done. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:8-9, *NIV*).

Our salvation is all grace. Grace is unmerited favor. It's when someone does something for someone else just because they want to—usually because they love them. That's what God has done for us. But this is something a lot of churches aren't telling people.

The world is waiting to hear the message of salvation by grace and grace alone. Their souls crave to hear the Good News. Will you be the one God uses to share that Good News with them? They're out there just waiting—out fishing and playing golf on Sunday mornings, desperate for some Good News. [†]

Rev. Stafford served as a Brethren pastor until 1993, when cancer forced him to retire. He now ministers to people over the Internet and—from his home in Walkerton, Ind.—is "Cyber-Pastor" to people around the world.

A Moving of God

(continued from previous page)

them with a heavenly determination based on his assurance that this is a God thing!

Southeast Christian Fellowship, in partnership with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and other area churches, will very soon begin the hard work of turning this building into a youth center. Their purpose is to make this a beacon of light in a very dark place.

But this youth center is just the tip of a much larger "iceberg" of ministry. Providing a place where young people can hang out is merely the beginning of a larger vision to transform youth, families, neighborhoods, and an entire city. I must tell you I was overwhelmed with excitement as I listened to Pastor Rickey tell about all God has done so far. We serve a truly awesome God!

Much remains to be done to prepare the way. A partnership is being formed of people with a heart for the people of Washington, D.C. I believe that we, The Brethren Church, have a unique opportunity to partner with our brothers and sisters of Southeast Christian Fellowship in this ministry—a ministry that has the potential of setting the pace for all inner-city ministries.

I trust that we Brethren will want to join this partnership. Various opportunities will be available. A short-term mission event is already being planned for next summer. Much more will need to be done. May I suggest that you seek the Lord's direction as to what role you might take in this ministry adventure. [†]

Rev. West is Director of Congregational Ministries and of U.S. Missions for The Brethren Church.

Ninety Cents is More Than a Dollar

By Alan Schmiedt

I GREW UP in a Christian farming family in which, as a child, I was taught to tithe. Whether I was given 50 cents per week as an allowance or paid ten cents for every gopher I killed, my parents required me to put ten percent in the collection plate at church. They also required me to put 50 percent in my savings account, which I thought was terribly unfair.

Life's hard lessons

As a child I understood the importance of tithing. But I spent some 20 years attempting to prove that it is not necessary that early in life to begin saving. In the process I managed to prove several other things rather profoundly. First among them was that my parents were right about a lot of things, including the importance of saving. Second was that one's propensity to spend does not reverse itself just because overspending is financially unhealthy. And third was that I should have gone to college from age 18 to 22 rather than when I did, from age 44 to 54.

Over the course of 30-some years of adult life, I have experienced several different levels of personal income—ranging from a dollar and a quarter per hour to ten thousand dollars per month. Then my business went broke, and I began working for wages—about eight dollars per hour. Let me say this: adjusting up is easier than adjusting down!

At times I spent so much of my income that I could not afford to tithe. And I never had enough so that I could save. More income permitted more spending, but there was never enough. First I didn't have enough to tithe or to save. Then I didn't have enough to pay all the bills.

At some point during the time I was at each income level, I would remember that failing to tithe is stealing from God. I was not willing to continue stealing from Him. Each time I resumed tithing, it was only a short time before I found that I could pay my bills and still have a little money

left over. God is faithful. He blesses our commitment to Him, and He promises to supply all our needs.

That is why I say, "Ninety cents is more than a dollar." When I give the first dime of every dollar I receive to God, I can do more with the remaining 90 cents than I can with the whole dollar when I keep it all for myself.

Having been through both flood and drought in my own financial experience, I have great compassion for people who are struggling with money. As I look around, I see a lot of people doing just that.

When I began studying this subject in earnest, I learned some things that surprised me. I found, for example, that the Bible has a lot to say about money management and accumulating wealth. Tithing is only one component of a complete, Bible-based, money-management plan. The Bible also has a lot to say about giving in various forms—charitable giving, praising, teaching, helping, etc.

John MacArthur, pastor of Grace Community Church in Panorama City, Calif., in his tape series *Mastery of Materialism*, says that "16 out of 38 of Christ's parables deal with money; more is said in the New Testament about money than about heaven and hell combined; five times more is said about money than prayer; and while there are 500 plus verses on both prayer and faith, there are over 2,000 verses dealing with money and possessions." It is evident that God cares how we manage our money.

Four biblical principles

Let us look at four biblical principles we can draw from the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. This is the one in which the master goes away and leaves part of his fortune in the care of three of his servants: five talents with one servant; two talents with a second servant; and one talent with a third. Jesus told this parable to teach us about the kingdom of heaven and His return. But its under-

lying principles apply to our stewardship of His resources as well.

What are these principles? Let's take a look (see Matt. 25:14-30).

1. *God owns everything.* The parable teaches that God is the one who delivers the goods into the hands of the servants. God can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, with whatever He wants, because everything is His.

2. *God expects His wealth to increase while it is in our care.* Each of the servants was required to give an account. The two who increased what they had received were commended; the one who did not was condemned. If God chooses to entrust some of what is His to me for a time, that is His prerogative. It is my responsibility to use it wisely.

3. *These principles apply regardless of the amount received.* It did not matter that the first servant had twice as much as the second servant. The responsibility and the spirit of the reward were exactly the same in both cases.

4. *Increase is not automatic.* You can't hid or hoard money. You have to use it wisely. It seems clear from the parable that I should expect God to expect me to return what is His to Him *with an increase* whenever He sees fit.

A biblical perspective

Some Christians are of the opinion that it is wrong to think about money or to seek to acquire more of it. It is not wrong; it is required! The Bible does teach that it is sinful to be overcome by materialism. And Jesus said that we cannot serve both God and mammon (money).

But Scripture does not say that we should be afraid of money or that we should avoid it. To the contrary, the Parable of the Talents makes it clear that we are expected to manage the wealth that God places in our care so that it increases for Him. [†]

Mr. Schmiedt, a member of Northgate Community Brethren Church in Manteca, Calif., is moderator of the N. California District and district representative to the Missionary Ministries Council. He operates his own almond farm and business. He suggests for further reading Master Your Money by Ron Blue; Foolproof Finances by David Mallonee; and Giving and Tithing by Larry Burkett.

Advancing the work of The Brethren Church

DISTRICT representatives, at-large members, and National Office staff members who sit on the Congregational Ministries Council and the Missionary Ministries Council met on October 29 and 30 to seek ways to advance the work of local Brethren congregations and the missions outreach of The Brethren Church. Also meeting on these two days to deal with various aspects of the work of the denomination were members of the Executive Board.

Following are a few significant items from the sessions of each group. More complete summaries of the meetings were sent to pastors and church moderators, copies of which are available from The Brethren Church National Office.

Congregational Ministries Council

Leadership was a major area of discussion in the Congregational Ministries Council meeting. The council's Leadership Care Study Group told of its current plans to focus on care for pastors and their families. Believing that this care must begin in the local church, the Study Group urges every church to set up a Pastoral Care Committee. Guidelines for this committee have been presented in the past, but the Study Group will soon provide additional information on the formation and duties of this committee.

The Study Group also believes that the concerns and needs of pastors' wives have often been overlooked. Recommendations to help remedy this include providing programming specifically for pastors' wives at the annual Brethren pastors and wives retreat and publishing a newsletter for pastors' wives.

Proposals for several "Leadership Initiatives" were considered by the Congregational Ministries Council. One of these was a proposal that new pastors and their wives, after 3 to 5 years of pastoral service, be invited to attend a week-long intensive program of pastoral care, re-

newal, and spiritual formation at Ashland Theological Seminary.

A second proposal was for a system of comprehensive assessment of pastors at selected points in their careers. The goal of this process would be to enhance the career potential of every Brethren pastor.

A third proposal was for an educational process to train a small group of Brethren pastors to provide leadership in the Brethren denomination in the next generation. All three proposals were assigned to appropriate groups or individuals for further development.

Rev. David West, Director of Congregational Ministries, reported that five applications had been received for the position of National Youth Leader. He expects to call a person to this position by the beginning of 1999. At Rev. West's suggestion, the council decided to invite the Brethren Youth in Christ Steering Committee to send a representative to attend future meetings of the Congregational Ministries Council.

Missionary Ministries Council

Reports of the recent birth Sundays of two new mission congregations—Grace Community Church in Winchester, Va., and Rock Springs Community Church in Vista, Calif.—were given by U.S. Missions Director David West. (See pages 6 & 7 of the November *EVANGELIST*.) A "soft launch" of the Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship near Peru, Ind., brought a new family that has shown interest in becoming part of that core group. And the core group of the Oasis Community Church of Phoenix, Ariz., has grown to 17 committed and gifted people.

Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries, provided current information on Brethren overseas missions. He also reported on his October trip to Southern Sudan (see the recent *Insight into Brethren Missions*) and told of World Relief's plans for increased relief and disci-

plishment efforts there. He also expressed his commitment to increasing promotion of World Relief in The Brethren Church.

Dr. Terry Wardle, associate professor of Church Planting at Ashland Theological Seminary, gave an overview of the assessment and training process Brethren Missionary Ministries will use at Ashland Theological Seminary. Developing this process is part of a five-year plan for Brethren Impact church planting. The seminary's first seminar on church planting is scheduled for January 18–23, 1999. Dr. Wardle also shared his vision for a future assessment and training program for renewal of *existing* churches.

Executive Board

In its sessions, the Executive Board took several actions regarding General Conference. As follow-up on this year's theme, "Visualize Renewal," it was recommended that the theme for the 1999 Conference be "Renew our Church" and that the theme for the year 2000 be "Renew Our Spirit."

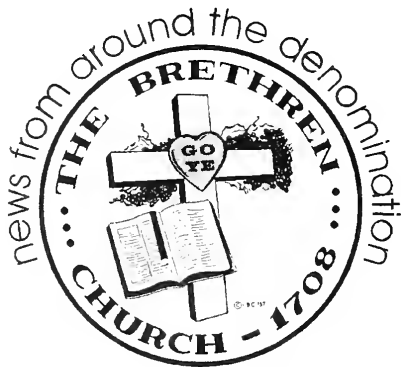
Concerning General Conference business sessions, the board adopted a policy that all organizations desiring to report to the Conference be given an opportunity to submit a written report through the Annual Report. If an organization does not submit a written report, it will not be given an opportunity to give an oral report at the business sessions. Reports received too late to appear in the report book could be included in the Conference *Highlights*.

Executive Director Emanuel Sandberg reported preliminary plans for the 1999 General Conference. Specific information about Conference speakers and a general outline of the Conference schedule will be presented at the March meeting.

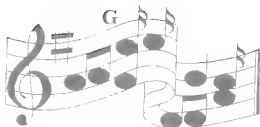
In the annual report to the board by the Trustees of the Brethren Retirement Plan, it was noted that problems with the plan administrator that had been reported at General Conference have now been cleared up. Therefore, there are no immediate plans to change administrators, as previously announced.

The next meetings of the Executive Board and the two councils will be held March 18 and 19, 1999. [¶]

— Richard C. Winfield, editor



Briefly Noted



October 18 was appreciation day at the **Mulvane, Kans., Brethren Church**. During the Sunday school hour, Dorothy Mills, chair of the Board of Christian Education, presented a certificate and a notepad and pen set to each Sunday school teacher in appreciation for his or her dedicated service to the church. Later, during the morning worship service, the congregation presented Pastor Joe and Sara Hanna a beautiful silk floral arrangement and dinner-theatre tickets for "a night on the town," in recognition of Pastor-Wife Appreciation Month.

The **Brethren Retreat Center** in the Indiana District offered pastors and their families three "getaway" days November 18-21. Pastoral families could come for two nights of free lodging and six meals on a donation basis. No program was planned—just a time to relax with family and partners in ministry after a busy summer. The announcement of the "getaway" explained that "This is one way that the BRC seeks to refresh Christians in their daily walk with the Saviour."

In their continuing effort to reach out to people in their community, Pastor Pat Velanzon and members of **Cross Keys Worship Center** (see the news story at the right) sponsored a dinner for area veterans and their spouses on Wednesday evening, November 11 (Veterans Day). A program featuring the singing group Heartland followed the meal. A total of 67 people attended, including 32 veterans.

Cross Keys Worship Center reaps a different kind of harvest in October

Port Republic, Va. — Cross Keys Worship Center, a Brethren class that meets in Virginia's beautiful Shenandoah Valley, reaped a different kind of harvest on October 4—a harvest of family and friends.

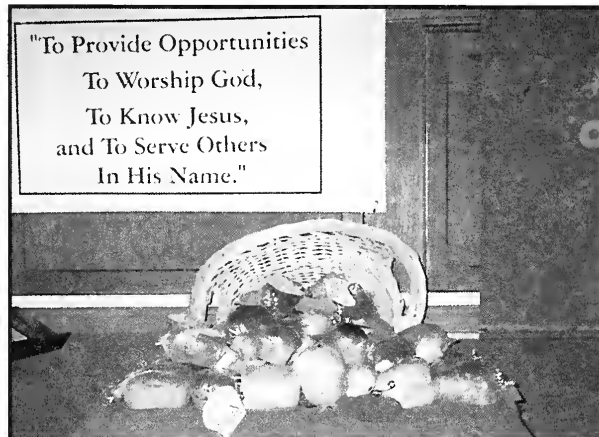
Like any harvest, this one required planting. That began on September 13, which was designated "Love Loaf Day." On that Sunday, several bakers in the congregation brought 66 small loaves of bread to the worship service. Each of these had an invitation attached to it encouraging the recipient to attend the worship service at Cross Keys on October 4 and to stay for a lunch that would follow.

The members of the congregation delivered these loaves of bread to friends and unchurched family members. The congregation also sent out "Come and See" postcards, hung posters around the community, and put advertisements on the radio and in the newspaper.

As a result, a crowd of 88 "came to see" on "Harvest Friends and Family Day"! This was more than double the May through September average attendance of 37.

The morning program included a creative puppet show by the youth, under the direction of Debbie Estep.

Special music was sung by the "Blue-Grassy" trio of Kitty Saufley, Ray Howdeyshell, and Leon Ervin. Spirited congregational singing was accompanied by keyboard and a "string trio" (see below). And Pastor



Sixty-six "love loaves" were planted in order to produce a "harvest of family and friends" at the Cross Keys Worship Center. Above the love loaves is the mission statement of the Cross Keys congregation.

Pat Velanzon preached a timely message on friendship.

The worshippers were also blessed by the surprise visit of three special friends from Southeast Christian Fellowship in Washington, D.C. (three hours away). They came bearing love and gifts from this sister congregation.

Following the service, a wonderful meal was served by the kitchen crew, headed by Pastor Velanzon. This brought to a conclusion a day on which, according to reporter

Kathy Velanzon, the Cross Keys Brethren "were all extremely blessed, happy, and grateful to God." [✠]

In reporting this event, Kathy Velanzon added: "We have more ideas and plans for future outreach, which we plan to share through the EVANGELIST. We hope other churches will share their ideas too. Let's encourage each other." To which the editor adds a hearty "Amen!"



Orville Landes (l.), Leon Ervin (c.), and Pastor Pat Velanzon provided pickin' and strummin' for some spirited congregational singing on "Harvest Friends and Family Day."



Pastors retreat to put focus on caring for one another

Bradenton, Fla. — “Ongoing Care for Each Other” will be the theme when Brethren pastors and their spouses gather March 2–4 at the Christian Retreat Center in Bradenton for their annual retreat.

Rev. Roger Charman, manager of Pastoral Ministries at Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, will be the main resource leader. An ordained pastor in the Brethren in Christ denomination, Rev. Charman has been at Focus on the Family for 11 years, following 15 years in youth work and pastoral ministry. In addition to introducing the theme, he will speak on “The Problem of Pastor Burnout and Dropout,” “Solutions That Work: Dealing With and Preventing Pastor Burnout,” and “The Seduction of Success.”

Also serving as resource leaders will be Rev. David L. West, Director of Congregational Ministries and of U.S. Missions for The Brethren Church, and Mr. James Frado, Manager of Stewardship and Planned Giving for The Brethren Church. Rev. West will speak to “The Pastoral Care Dialogue,” and Mr. Frado will present “A Practical Approach to Biblical Finances.”

The retreat will begin with registration at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon, March 2, and conclude on Thursday afternoon, March 4.

The costs for the retreat are: one person—\$125 for shared room; \$175 for private room; couple—\$225 (\$250 for room with kitchenette); children—\$40 per child plus \$35 for child care. Churches are encouraged to cover expenses for pastors and their wives to attend the retreat.

Registration forms were included in the October issue of *Leadership Letter*. They should be sent to Phil Lersch, 6301 56th Avenue, N, St. Petersburg, FL 33709. The registration deadline is January 10. [†]

Jefferson Brethren Church celebrates November 1 as “Breakthrough Sunday”

Goshen, Ind. — Members of the Jefferson Brethren Church celebrated November First as “Breakthrough Sunday.”

According to Pastor Dan Lawson, the Jefferson Church is at the most difficult growth barrier for churches to overcome—the

200 to 300 barrier. The congregation has bumped against this barrier on several occasions in the past, but it has never gotten over it for any length of time.

Breakthrough Sunday, therefore, was a day for the Jefferson Brethren Church to experience a *breakthrough* in attendance. It was also a day for the church to experience a *breakthrough* in the outpouring of God’s Spirit. And it was a time for individuals to experience a *breakthrough* in their personal relationship with the Lord. During the month of October, Pastor Lawson presented sermons on how to make a breakthrough with God in one’s personal life.

Breakthrough Sunday also gave church members a reason to get excited about their church and a special opportunity to invite others to attend. In the days leading up to the event, church members were encouraged to hand out flyers about Breakthrough Sunday; to invite friends, family, neighbors, and acquaintances to attend; and to be in prayer for a moving of God’s Spirit



on the church. To add a sense of expectancy as the day drew near, members were invited to place a small paper silhouette of a person on the sanctuary wall for everyone they knew would attend.

The attendance goal for Breakthrough Sunday was 500, and the worship service that Sunday was held at a local elementary school in order to accommodate that number. Pastor Lawson reports, “We lost count around 420, so I am not sure if we got to 500 or not. But it was a huge success, and I am convinced that we will see some positive growth from it.”

The Lord touched several lives during the service, and many of the guests made commitments to keep coming. To encourage this commitment, a flower was delivered to the home of each guest on Sunday afternoon after the service, and Pastor Lawson telephoned each guest on Sunday afternoon or evening. In addition, Tim DeLaughter, Pastor of Care and Nurture at Jefferson, sent each guest a handwritten note, and the appropriate Adult Bible Fellowships (Sunday school classes) are doing follow-up as well.

As a result of Breakthrough Sunday, the Jefferson Church has gained five new families, and residual growth is continuing to occur, according to Pastor Lawson. [†]

World Relief in Cambodia

Wheaton, Ill. — Rural Cambodians, who struggle to survive even in the best of times, are facing critical food shortages after two years of floods and a season of drought have wrecked havoc on their rice crops. In desperation, many family members have sent their children away to work, or they are foraging for food.

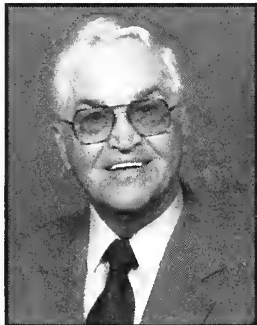
World Relief is providing emergency food to 1,200 families in Santouk

district of Kompong Thom province, one of the hardest hit areas in the country. In a food for work program, local Cambodians build fish ponds in exchange for cooking oil, canned fish, hoe heads, seed packets, and 110 pounds of rice. The World Food Program is contributing 40 tons of rice to the effort. World Relief is working through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency to implement the program. [†]



In Memory

Rev. John T. Byler, 86, former Brethren pastor and Pastor Emeritus of the Louisville, Ohio, First Brethren Church, died October 24.



Rev. Byler served as a pastor for 40 years. He began his ministry in the Church of the Brethren in 1941, serving two congregations in that denomination. In 1946 he became pastor of the Louisville, Ohio, First Brethren Church. This was followed by pastorates at Brethren churches in New Lebanon, Ohio (1952-60); South Bend (First), Ind. (1960-69); and Canton (Trinity), Ohio (1969 until his retirement in 1981). He served as General Conference Moderator in 1968.

John was born August 4, 1912, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the son of John I. and Amanda (Troyer) Byler. He received a B.A. degree from Juniata (Pa.) College and did graduate work at Temple University School of Theology and Oberlin School of Theology.

He was married for 57 years to Lois (Brewer) Byler, who survives him. Also surviving are four daughters and sons-in-law—Joyce and Rev. John Brownsberger of Louisville, Ohio; Joanne and John Shupp of Middletown, Ohio; Judith and John Haenes of Forth Worth, Tex.; and Jeanette and Bruce Judisch of San Antonio, Tex.; 12 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Services were held October 27 at Louisville First Brethren Church, Pastor Jim Koontz officiating, and at the graveside, Rev. John Brownsberger (Rev. Byler's son-in-law) officiating. Memorial gifts may be made to Louisville First Brethren. [†]

Donald Rowser retires following 45 years of pastoral service in The Brethren Church

Goshen, Ind.

— Rev. Donald Rowser retired from the full-time pastorate earlier this year after 45 years of very effective service as a pastor in The Brethren Church.

A retirement reception was held June 7 at the Goshen First Brethren Church, where Rev. Rowser had served since 1985. It

was attended by members of the Goshen congregation and by Brethren from other area churches. The day was also the 46th wedding anniversary date of Rev. Rowser and his wife Charlene

Born June 9, 1930, in Johnstown, Pa., Rowser joined the Johnstown Third Brethren Church at the age of 10. Called to Christian ministry by that congregation in 1950, he attended Ashland College (B.A. in 1954) and Ashland Theological Seminary (B.D. in 1957).

While in college and seminary, he pastored the North Georgetown, Ohio, Brethren Church (1953-58). In 1958 he became pastor of the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church, serving there until 1965. This was followed by pastorates at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon, Ohio (1965-85), and at Goshen First Brethren Church (1985 until his retirement on June 30, 1998).

During his years of pastoral ministry, he served on various district and denomination boards and committees. He was General Conference Moderator in 1972. He also served as moderator of the Ohio District. He was a member for more than 30 years of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, which he served as treasurer and president, and he also served for a time as president of



Retiring Pastor Donald Rowser (c.) receives a congratulatory handshake from David Conder, moderator of the Goshen First Brethren Church, as Charlene Rowser looks on.

the Ohio District Mission Board. In addition, he was a member for several years of the Ministry of Pastoral and Congregational Care of the Indiana District.

An accomplished chalk artist, Rev. Rowser presented numerous "chalk talks" in churches, schools, nursing homes, and for civic groups. In addition, he held evangelistic services in more than 50 Brethren churches.

Not wanting to work while her husband relaxed, Mrs. Rowser also retired in June. The former Charlene Tracy of Twelve Mile, Ind., Mrs. Rowser, like her husband, is a graduate of Ashland College (B.A., 1953). In addition to her responsibilities as a pastor's wife, mother (*see below*), church member and musician, she served for 26 years in education, most of those years as a school psychologist.

The Rowsers are parents of two children. Their son, David, and his wife and children serve as missionaries in Moldova (formerly part of the U.S.S.R.). Their daughter, Tracy Whiteside, and her family live near Columbus, Ohio, where Tracy's husband, Jeff, is associate pastor of the Smoky Row Brethren Church. Immediately after retiring, the Rowsers, accompanied by the Whitesides, traveled to Moldova to visit David and his family. [†]

Newspaper photo by Holly Osborn



In Memory

Alberta Holsinger, 75, wife of retired Brethren pastor Rev. Robert G. Holsinger, died unexpectedly following heart by-pass surgery on November 4. She was a member for many years of the Park Street Brethren Church, where she served in a variety of children's ministries, in the drama ministry, and was an active member of the W.M.S.

During her many years of Christian ministry, Mrs. Holsinger also served as National Patroness for Signal Lights, as National Literature Secretary for the W.M.S., and was editor first of the Signal Lights column and later the children's page ("Little Crusader") for THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST.

She was born June 29, 1923, in Ashland, the daughter of John H. and Dovie M. Brubaker Pryor. She was a graduate of both Ashland College and Ashland Theological Seminary. She and Robert were married February 17, 1952. Together they served the Cameron W. Va., Quiet Dell, Pa., Warsaw, Ind., Falls City, Nebr., Morrill, Kans., and Ashland Garber Brethren churches. She also taught elementary school in Ashland for 27 years.

She is survived by her husband; two daughters and a son-in-law, Joan M. Holsinger of Ashland and Gwen and Keith Stuart of Dayton; one son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Liz Holsinger of Rowsburg, Ohio; and four grandchildren.

Services were held November 7 at Park Street Brethren Church with Pastor Arden Gilmer officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to Missionary Ministries of The Brethren Church, Ashland Theological Seminary, or Park Street Brethren Church. [✝]

Since God has appeared in a manger, should we be surprised to find Him anywhere?

Dr. and Mrs. Glenn L. Clayton honored for 50 years of service to Ashland University

Ashland, Ohio —

Dr. Glenn L. and Janet Clayton were honored by Ashland University on Saturday evening, October 31, for their 50 years of service to the university. The occasion was also the 88th birthday celebration for Dr. Clayton.

Nearly 300 guests attended the gala, held in the Convocation Center on the university campus. The evening included a dinner; a "This is Your Life" computer presentation recapping Dr. Clayton's 88 years; a musical tribute on the piano by Elizabeth Pastor, trustee professor of music; and comments paying tribute to the Claytons.

Paying tribute were AU President Dr. G. William Benz, President Emeritus Dr. Joseph Shultz, Provost Emeritus Dr. Lucille Ford, Professor Emeritus Dr. Fred Martinelli, and Thomas Stoffer, vice chairman of the AU Board of Trustees.

In addition, State Rep. Bill Harris of Ashland presented Dr. Clayton a special recognition from the Ohio General Assembly, and Ashland Mayor Douglas Cellar delivered a proclamation honoring Clayton. At the end of the celebration, Dr. Benz announced that through the efforts of the university and the Claytons' many friends, more than \$85,000 in donations was being added to the Glenn L. and Janet S. Clayton Endowed Scholarship Fund at AU.

Dr. Clayton became president of Ashland College in 1948 at the age of 37, the youngest man to fill that office. At that time, Ashland College had four buildings, 300 students, and assets of about \$4 million. Four years after his arrival, a fire destroyed Founders Hall, the school's administration and main classroom building. Many thought the fire might put an end to the college, but



Ashland University President Emeritus Dr. Glenn L. Clayton and his wife Janet (both at l.), with AU's current president Dr. G. William Benz and his wife Gerry. Ashland University photo.

Dr. Clayton rallied support to rebuild Founders Hall, and thus began a period of unprecedented growth on the campus.

By the time of his retirement in 1977, the college had grown to 36 buildings, total assets of \$30 million, and 2,000 students. Since retiring as president, he has continued to serve the university in a number of capacities, most recently in the Office of Development as director of the AU 1000 Club, which provides funds for endowed scholarships, and as coordinator of the university's roundtable program.

A native of New Lebanon, Ohio, where he was a member of The Brethren Church there, Clayton received a bachelor of science in education degree from Miami University of Ohio, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Ohio State University. He served for 12 years in public schools and then taught in the history department at Ohio State University before becoming president of Ashland College.

During their years in Ashland, the Claytons have been members of Park Street Brethren Church, where Dr. Clayton taught Sunday school for many years. He is also a past moderator of the General Conference of The Brethren Church.

The Claytons have two sons, John and Glenn L. (II), four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. [✝]



N. Indiana W.M.S. Fall Retreat Focuses on "Joy in Serving"

Goshen, Ind. — "Joy in Serving" was the theme of the annual northern Indiana W.M.S. Fall Rally, held October 10 at the Goshen First Brethren Church. W.M.S. members and guests from the Bryan, Ohio, Brethren Church and from the Brighton Chapel, Goshen, Milford, Nappanee, and New Paris Brethren Churches in northern Indiana attended the gathering.

The theme for the day was highlighted in an inspirational talk by Bonnie Munson. She encouraged listeners to "accept what is, and allow God to help us lovingly make the best of each situation." Her message carried more impact because Ms. Munson has lived most of her life in a wheelchair as a result of having polio as a child.

At the conclusion of her message, a surprise presentation was made to Ms. Munson by Rev. Donald Rowser. He presented her a plaque from the Missionary Ministries Council of The Brethren Church in recognition and appreciation of her 25



Rev. Donald Rowser presents a plaque —on behalf of the Missionary Ministries Council of The Brethren Church—to Bonnie Munson in appreciation for her 25 years of service with Brethren House Ministries in St. Petersburg, Fla.

years of service with Brethren House Ministries in St. Petersburg, Fla. A similar plaque was presented to Phil and Jean Lersch at General Conference in August, but Bonnie was unable to attend that event.

The rally was filled with love and Christian fellowship, as devotions based on 1 Corinthians 12 and 2 Corinthians 9 directed minds to avenues of joyful service. Music was also an important part of the day. The women enjoyed group singing,

as well as instrumental and vocal selections presented by some of the members of the Goshen Church's Youth Choir. Another noteworthy feature on the program was a report of a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, given by three Goshen W.M.S. members who had the privilege of making the trip.

The rally, including the noon meal served family style in the church fellowship hall, provided many opportunities for old friendships to be renewed and new ones to be formed. The gathering also gave the women an opportunity to provide support for Ashland Theological Seminary. An offering for the seminary was received in the amount of \$537.

"But most important," according to Esther Mishler of the Goshen Church, "was the fact that this group of women shared ideas and concern for serving various needs. At the same time they delighted in honoring a special person—Bonnie Munson—who still reflects joy in all that she does."

— reported by Esther Mishler

Mulvane, Kans. —

Scott Phillips (l. to r.), Dean and Dorothy Mills, and Carolyn Tucker were affirmed as deacons and deaconesses during a



service of ordination held October 4 during the Sunday morning worship hour at the Mulvane Brethren Church. Pastor Joe Hanna (r.) conducted the ordination service, assisted by Deaconess Lilith Howard (2nd from r.). Each candidate served a six-month period of probationary service prior to receiving a vote of affirmation from the congregation.

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